



HIT LIST

volume two/number four

november/december 2000

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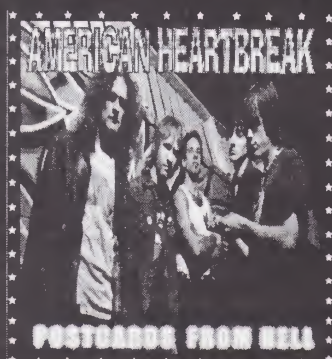
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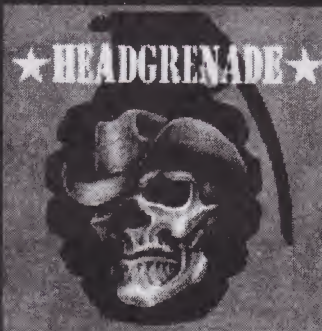
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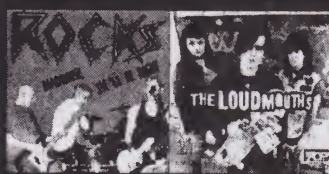
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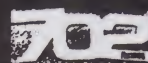
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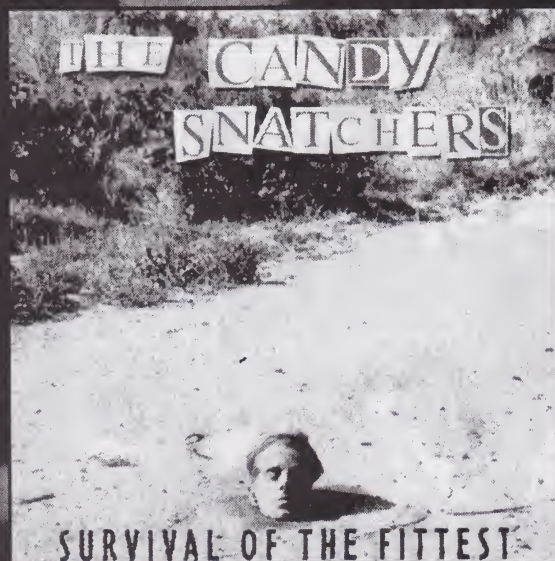
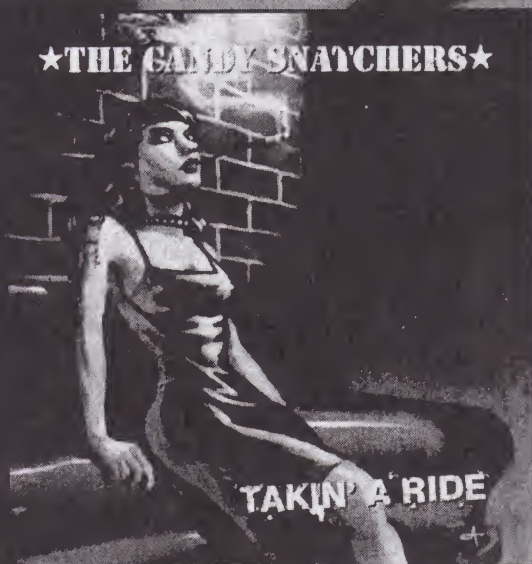
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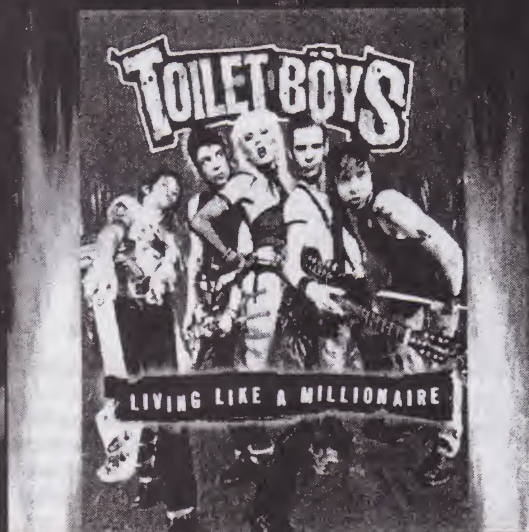
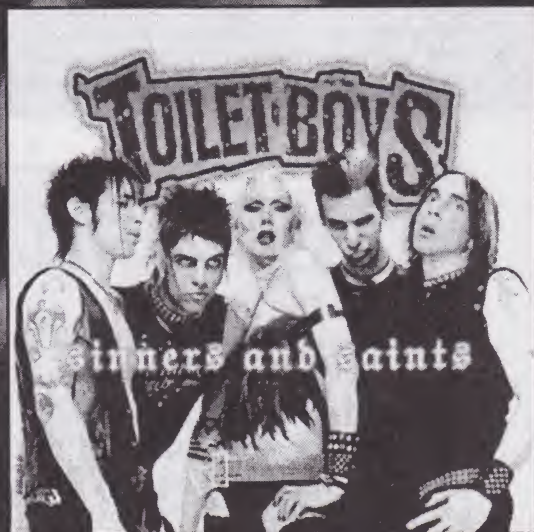
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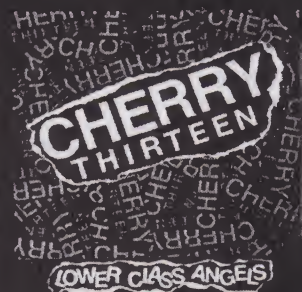
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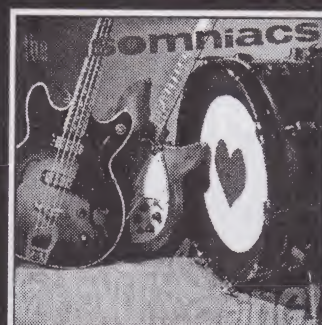
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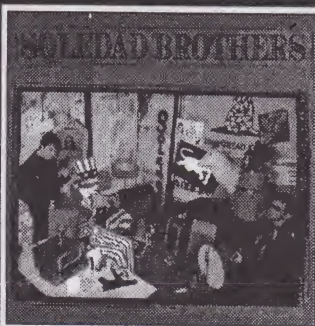
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I was originally planning to devote this column to the subject of critical thinking, since rigorous thought seems to be in increasingly short supply in today's punk scene. However, Jack Rabad's acute observations in this very issue have instead caused me to shift gears and reflect a little on the same important topic he dealt with — the impact of rapid technological developments on underground rock'n'roll music. As per usual Jack's analysis was imbued with wisdom and insight, and my intention here is merely to flesh out one facet of his argument concerning what he referred to as the "perversion" of the DIY ethic. Although I certainly have no disagreements at all with his justifiable complaints about the "horrific glut" and "huge excess" of contemporary independent and punk music releases, the only remaining question is whether the current situation represents a "perversion" of the "do-it-yourself" (DIY) ethos (as Jack implies) or is instead the inevitable consequence and predictable result of that very ethos, a trend that may be facilitated by technological progress but is not really attributable to it. This in turn raises the larger issue of just how much "democratization" should be considered a good thing.

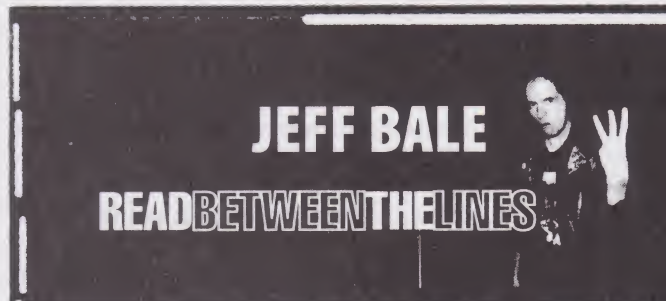
For years I've been painfully aware of the fact that the whole DIY phenomenon was a double-edged sword. On the one hand, the DIY ethic strongly encouraged a handful of people with real talent, a unique vision, or something important to say to create or produce something of their own, regardless of whether it met with the approval of mainstream society and the squares who run it. This, obviously, is a very good thing. Among other positive benefits, the renewed effusion of astonishingly good independent records played a key role, at least for a time, in loosening the stranglehold that commercially viable and culturally "acceptable" music groups — along with their corporate sponsors — have long maintained over the production of rock'n'roll. It also enabled eccentrics with minoritarian political views to reach a wider audience, however small. In that sense it initially encouraged musical creativity and the expression of a diverse array of opinions, developments which are always to be welcomed. The DIY ethos has thus had many salutary consequences.

But there was always a downside to the whole DIY phenomenon, one which was all too often overlooked during the initial phase of enthusiastic if not orgiastic self-production. Just as it became easier and easier, especially after underground institutions were created to publicize activities, distribute indie records, and organize tours for little-known bands, for musically talented visionaries and balls-out rockers with unconventional or subversive viewpoints to release records (and put out fanzines), so too did it become that much easier for the talentless, the clueless, the trendy, the greedy, and the mindlessly conformist to churn out ever-increasing volumes of outright swill. That, essentially, is the situation that all of us punters, record collectors, and zine editors now find ourselves in — we are all inundated with a flood of unimaginative and hopelessly generic new releases, the overwhelming majority of which should never have seen the light of day in the first place. As Jack points out, the DIY ethic meant that *everybody* — no longer only "professional musicians" — could throw caution to the winds and at least *make an effort* to crank out worthwhile music, but *not* that everybody — including the utterly talentless and unoriginal — would necessarily be able to succeed in doing so or that they actually *should* release music. Nor that, heaven forbid, they would so easily be able to.

Once upon a time, I actually looked forward to receiving review copies of punk records with an almost breathless sense of anticipation, but in general that time is long since past. Now, I'm more likely to feel a modicum of dread at the prospect of having to hear hundreds of awful new releases each issue in order to locate the occasional gold nuggets, and indeed one of the worse things about putting out *Hit List* is having to set aside the time to listen to all of those releases before distributing them to the appropriate reviewers. Even though it usually takes only a couple of minutes to decide the fate of each release — e.g., the grindcore and super fast thrash all end up in Athena Dread's package — given their immense proliferation it still takes several

hours to finish this tedious job. In the end, I usually walk away with a fair number of 60's garage and 77-style punk *reissues*, but only a relatively small handful of new releases by current bands. Don't get me wrong here — I feel very fortunate to have the opportunity to discover these truly exciting newer releases. It's just that there are far too few of them. The very scarcity of eye-opening contemporary groups is one reason why I get really excited when I run across outstanding acts like the BLACK HALOS, the EMBROOKS, AEROBITCH, the STALLIONS (R.I.P.), the LOWER CLASS BRATS, or the PINKZ. If only such worthy bands weren't so few and far between!

Let's be perfectly clear about the chief differences between hunting for underground punk and r'n'r records in, say, 1978 and 1998, shall we? First, there were a hell of a lot less punk and independent "New



Wave" bands around at that time, so few in fact that it was actually possible to acquire all of the records they put out (assuming you could find 'em, which was very difficult except at the very best record stores in the very hippest towns). No one in his or her right mind would even try to purchase every punk release nowadays, and those few nutcases who are still foolish enough to attempt it would have to have access to sacks full of money to be able to pay for them all. In 1978, not only was it possible to buy every single punk release, but it was also possible to listen to each one over and over again until one became intimately familiar with their merits (and demerits). This no longer can be done, even if one actually wished to. Second, there was a much higher proportion of good releases to mediocre or bad ones back then. I would estimate that well over 50%, and perhaps even as many as 75%, of the punk records available up through 1978 were really, really good. Why? Because all sorts of brilliant, creative people and obsessive, unreconstructed rock'n'rollers were immediately rejuvenated and drawn willy nilly into the exciting new punk musical and cultural movement. And it was not simply the apparent novelty of punk which accounted for its appeal, since primitive musical power, rebellious attitudes, a wickedly satirical edge, intelligence, and a sense of alienation were all often palpable on these early punk releases. Moreover, most of the bands associated with these first and second punk waves knew how to write extremely catchy r'n'r songs that were filled with memorable guitar licks, hooks, bridges, and choruses, despite being constantly ridiculed by "boring old farts" (BOFs) for producing nothing but a noisy racket. This is precisely why so many of these records have stood the test of time and are now considered to be "classics" by r'n'r maniacs and record collectors. We're not talking about simple nostalgia of the sort that makes even commercial schlock sound "appealing" twenty years later, if for no other reason than that it reminds people of their lost youth. (Try comparing 99% of today's "punk" dross with amazing songs by even minor punk bands from the golden era of punk, e.g., the MODELS' "Freeze", the CORTINAS' "Fascist Dictator", the RINGS' "I Wanna Be Free", the HUNS' "Glad He's Dead", the DEFNICS' "51%". If you think the current stuff is even remotely comparable, you need to get your ears cleaned out or have your fucking head examined.)

When we contrast this highly favorable situation as regards scarcity and quality with that existing today, the differences are immediately apparent.

First of all, as Jack has indicated, at least several hundred punk and indie rock releases currently come out each month, a number so large that even if one were actually motivated to do so, one would have to spend 24 hours a day listening to them in order to really "appreciate" them fully. Second, the proportion of noteworthy releases relative to humdrum, generic ones has become so miniscule that few rock'n'rollers with decent taste would even be willing to waste their valuable free time listening carefully to all of them. Nor should they. In short, one now has to work really, really hard — much too hard — to uncover that relative handful of musical gems buried in the midst of all this putrescence. If truth be told, referring to the remainder as "putrescence" may even be overly complimentary, since it implies that something is so rotten and disgusting that it actually stands out. In this case, however, what we are really confronted with is an endless stream of utterly mediocre music that *fails to make any impression at all*. At best, most of it is only capable of inspiring yawns.

This excessive and seemingly endless profusion of worthless music typically ends up having a catastrophic impact on the fate of the truly inspired r'n'r music that's still being made today. Instead of allowing it to stand out even more by way of contrast, the effluvia of junk tends to bury the good stuff completely, making it all the more difficult to unearth. Let me provide a firsthand example of what I'm talking about: these days, when I look through the section devoted to new 7" releases in top record stores like Amoeba and Rasputin's, I soon discover that I haven't the slightest idea what most of the new punk releases even sound like. Not only haven't I actually heard the records themselves, but I've never even heard of most of the bands that put them out. The same is true for full-length CDs. Nor am I especially motivated to find out about them, since I know from painful experience that most of them will turn out to be eminently forgettable. If someone who edits a leading punk rock magazine and has been heavily involved in the punk scene for nearly 25 years doesn't know who the hell so many of these new bands are, how can the average fan or casual consumer be expected to be familiar with them, much less be willing to risk buying their products? Unless one has sufficient funds to buy *everything*, as well as sufficient time and motivation to listen to every new release, it has become virtually impossible to determine which of the 1000 or so punk records that are currently in the bins are really worth purchasing. What this means in practice is that most of them will remain unsold and unheard, which makes it all the more difficult for their creators to survive, much less prosper. (Of course, anybody in a "punk" band who goes into it expecting to prosper materially is a damn fool.)

The sad truth is that *everyone* would be much better off, above all discerning r'n'r fans and quality r'n'r bands, if there were far fewer "underground" DIY releases flooding the market. The very same problem of glut exists, regardless of what type of punk or underground music one likes. Although most of my complaints here are intended to reflect the concerns of fans of meritorious trashed out punk'n'roll, my remarks are equally applicable to discerning fans of underground music subgenres that I personally despise, such as navel-gazing "emo", macho (and/or straightedge)

hardcore, arty farty post-punk, industrial music, Christian rock, smily-face pop punk, speedmetal, stoner rock, grindcore, and "professional punk" (i.e., bland, commercially accessible punk-by-numbers). Other than people with really bad taste in music, no one benefits from the endless proliferation of mediocre, soundalike, copycat bands, no matter what type of music they play. It doesn't really bother me if one band like FUGAZI, AGNOSTIC FRONT, NEGATIVLAND, THROBBING GRISTLE, MXPX, GREEN DAY, NUCLEAR ASSAULT, FU MANCHU, CANNIBAL CORPSE, or NOFX achieves fame or fortune, but surely the world could do without dozens, hundreds, or perhaps even thousands of lesser versions of those bands. Nor, by the same token, does the world really need to be subjected to hundreds of lame bands that badly ape the NY DOLLS, the PISTOLS, the DEAD BOYS, BLITZ, or the HUMBERS — a few outstanding bands inspired by their stellar example would be vastly preferable.

Given the existing glut of worthless releases, rapid technological changes and innovations of the type alluded to by Jack can only serve to worsen the situation, since they make it that much easier for hordes of mediocrities to crank out new releases, whether in the form of CD's, CD-R's, or MP3's. Other than a handful of highly eccentric and perversely obsessive fans like Mel Cheplowitz, who actually enjoy spending several hours a day browsing through music websites in the hopes of locating and downloading a few obscure treats, most of us can only view this trend with a sort of horrified fascination. One can easily imagine the glut increasing by a factor of ten or one hundred within a very short period of time, which would make it all the more difficult for really good bands to get noticed and for music fans to find out about those same bands.

I prefer not to even think about the ever-increasing flood of junk we'll soon be getting at Hit List HQ as these developments accelerate. Years ago, I strongly urged Tim Yohannan not to create a new review section in MRR devoted to demo tapes, not only because it meant a lot more work for me as review editor, but also because I knew full well that we would soon be inundated with hundreds of piss poor cassettes created by half-assed bands that were not yet ready to go into the studio and produce something of value. My reasoning was that any (American) band that couldn't even manage to

put out a decent 7", either on their own or by attracting the attention of an existing underground label, probably didn't yet have what it took to make a good record. Although Walter later foolishly volunteered to take on the responsibility for reviewing demo tapes in MRR, my jaundiced view turned out to be more or less justified since, with very few exceptions, most of the bands that sent in cassettes for review were pretty horrible and almost none later managed to release a worthwhile piece of vinyl.

The same is probably true for

bands who crank out MP3's today, considering how easy it's becoming to create them, which is precisely why I'm really not looking forward to the digital online "democratic revolution" in music that so many others have predicted. I'm sure there will also be many positive results of these ongoing technological changes — some of them no doubt unforeseeable — and I'm certainly not going to make any effort to impede these developmental processes, but in the meantime don't expect me to uncritically promote what may well turn out to compound the tragic effects of the whole DIY ethos.

The above ruminations suggests that too much "democracy" is not always a good thing. Just as it would not be desirable if every single citizen, no matter how ill-informed and emotionally disturbed, was able to exert an equally

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significant influence on the political process in parliamentary democracies, so too isn't it necessarily a good thing if every single would-be musician, no matter how uninspired or talentless, injects record after record into what is, after all, a fairly limited underground music market. Would you want every Tom, Dick, and Harriet, no matter how unqualified, to be operating on your brain, piloting passenger jets, representing you in court, deciding your fate in a jury trial, supervising your children, or making the final decision about whether or not to launch a nuclear strike? Of course not. Why, then, would you wish to be subjected to an endless supply of boring music that's being generated by masses of talentless mediocrities? Unfortunately, this is precisely what current technology seems to be on the verge of making possible, or rather dramatically accelerating the flow of. Welcome to the "brave new musical world" of the next decade! Like it or not, it's coming soon to a computer terminal near you — along with secret and not-so-secret monitoring devices.

PROTESTS IN L.A.

As I was watching news coverage of the recent protests during the Democratic Convention in Los Angeles, I couldn't help but feel that the demonstrators should have been carrying signs that better reflected their foolish or incoherent agendas. Among the more appropriate slogans I had in mind were the following: "We're Against Stuff", "Rationality" (with a red "no" symbol overlaying the word), "Fuck Shit Up", and "Temper Tantrums Rule". Even Bobby Rush, the former Black Panther who was subsequently elected as a Chicago city councilman, was forced to concede (during a televised interview) that, although he had always been sympathetic to protesting and protestors, in this case he really couldn't understand what the hell the demonstrators were going on about. He pointed out that during the 1960s civil disobedience protests had generally been organized in support of two high profile issues — the Civil Rights struggle and ending the Vietnam War — whose importance was universally recognized and which, not coincidentally, enabled the protesters to occupy the moral high ground. In contrast, he argued, almost all of today's radicals are solipsistically promoting their own narrow agendas, agendas which most people neither understand nor care very much about. I would only add that it's awfully hard to claim the moral high ground when you're not in fact occupying it, as is all too often the case these days. As Marshall McLuhan once pointed out, "moral indignation is a technique used to endow an idiot with dignity." Is it any wonder that most observers viewed these protests as a joke?

As for the upcoming election, I find all the candidates to be so repulsive that can't even imagine voting. Gore the Bore resembles a storefront dummy more than a living, breathing human being, and his selection of a moralistic, censorial prude like Lieberman as his running mate was an atrocity. On the other hand, that smirking fratboy Bushie should wear a dunce cap every time he gets up to speak, since he's obviously a "slow boy" in the Dan Quayle mold, and his VP choice Cheney is equally odious. Not surprisingly, all four of them are bought and paid for by various special interests. The less said about Pat Buchanan and Ralph Nader, both of whom seem to be mentally disturbed, the better. The rest of the candidates don't stand a chance, so they may as well not even be on the ballot. Now that's what I call a real choice! Personally, I think the American people are entitled to at least as

JEFFBALE

many choices for President as they now have for frozen peas.

The basic dilemma we all face is that the current system stinks in many ways, but the "really existing" alternatives stink even more — much more. If I may borrow from Winston Churchill, who once justly quipped that democracy was the worst political system ever invented...except for all the others, I would likewise suggest that capitalism is the worst economic system ever invented...except for all the others. Somehow, recognizing this doesn't provide all that much consolation.

FOR THOSE ABOUT TO PUNK OUT, I SALUTE YOU

In this issue I'd like to say a few words about two mandatory reissues on the Sundazed label that somehow escaped mention in my column in Hit List #8 — the first two SHADOWS OF KNIGHTS albums. However, I should first point out that I'm unable to be even remotely detached and objective when it comes to the SHADOWS, since I grew up in Chicago and me and several friends used to drive up whenever we could to see them play, live and in-person, in the northwestern suburb of Arlington Heights, where they served as a veritable "house band" at the Cellar during the mid-60s. In other words, the SHADOWS OF KNIGHT are far too closely intertwined with my permanently ingrained memories of the wonderfully exhilarating yet terrifying teenage phase I was then going through, a time when I was first

beginning to sow my wild oats, have sex with beautiful girls, and see scads of rock'n'roll bands live. Along with the SHADOWS, who were always my local faves, I also had the incredibly good fortune to be able to see many other classic Chicago garage bands in their prime, including the woefully underrated CRYAN' SHAMES. (By the way — hint, hint — some oldies label with superior taste and a modicum of commercial acumen should immediately reissue the first

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two CRYAN' SHAMES LPs, plus bonus single tracks. All that is currently available is a "greatest hits" CD package on Columbia, which contains only a handful of their early gems [songs 1-7] and way too much later fluff.) I can't even begin to convey just how liberatory it was for me to periodically escape from my hopelessly dysfunctional family and attend r'n'r gigs, together with other rebellious, shaggy-haired misfits who were desperately looking for excitement and hoping to dramatically transform their lives. (By the way, does anyone out there still remember the Pink Phinque [spelling?] club on Sheridan Road in the Chicago neighborhood of Rogers Park? It was the very first venue I attended to see a rock'n'roll show, other than those at "socials" sponsored by my grammar and high schools.)

Getting back to the subject at hand, the SHADOWS put out two LPs on the Dunwich label which no fan of tough-sounding 60's punk should ignore. Like most albums released at the time, both "Gloria" and "Back Door Man" turned out to be somewhat uneven. This is not at all surprising. After all, it was standard practice back then for labels to release full-lengths as soon as possible after one of their bands produced a hit single. Most of the albums that were then prematurely rushed to the pressing plant in order to capitalize on a band's sudden success consisted of one or two "hits" and a host of unexceptional cover songs. And since the SHADOWS were never really

HIT SQUAD

prolific songwriters, but rather a raunchy and hard rockin' garage punk combo, one could easily be forgiven for predicting that their long-players wouldn't end up being particularly distinctive. But you'd be wrong, since both are filled with blistering, punked-out R&B covers, several of which are better than the originals.

A case in point is the song "Gloria", the SHADOWS' biggest hit, which was written by Van Morrison and originally performed by THEM, the raw Belfast R&B band he fronted. For decades a fierce debate has raged between the partisans of THEM and the devotees of the SHADOWS over whose version of "Gloria" is best. (We can leave PATTI SMITH's extended mid-70's treatment of the song out of this discussion, though it's pretty damn good in its own right.) Without seeking to minimize the greatness of THEM's original, which is primitive, raspy, and even more garagey, I personally have no doubt whatsoever that the SHADOWS OF KNIGHT's version is superior. Even though it's a wee bit more commercial — albeit without losing even a hint of the original's toughness and dynamism — somehow the latter just ends up sounding...well, so perfect that it always gives me goosebumps. Maybe it's the sharper contrast between the relatively subdued verses and the the loud-as-fuck choruses and bridge, maybe it's the deeper bassline, maybe it's the crystal clear guitar tone, maybe it's the machine-gun drumming, or maybe it's Jim Sohn's quintessential 60's punk sneer, but whatever the reason the SHADOWS version is and will always remain the definitive version of that particular song. Aside from "Gloria", the fabulous moody original "Dark Side", and the mid-tempo original ("It Always Happens That Way"), the first SHADOWS LP contains mainly R&B covers (by the likes of BO DIDDLEY, JOHN LEE HOOKER, and WILLIE DIXON). Some of these are paint-strippers that blow away the originals, such as "Light Bulb Blues" and the raved-up "I Just Want to Make Love to You"; some are tough as nails but not earth-shattering (like "Oh Yeah" and "Boom Boom"); and a couple are pretty lame ("Let It Rock" and "Hoochie Coochie Man"). Other than the last-named, though, there's nary a duff tune, and the band's instrumental punch is commendable. Plus, on the Sundazed CD, you'll find several bonus 45s, including the great "Someone Like Me" (shame about the horns).

Their second LP, "Back Door Men", is probably more inconsistent, but it contains two of the best-ever SHADOWS OF KNIGHTS tracks, "Bad Little Woman" and "Gospel Zone", an uptempo blues punk original. Their version

of "Bad Little Woman" is one of the most savage 60's punk covers of all time, and once again the contrast between the quieter verses and tremendously loud choruses and bridge lends the song an incredible power and dynamism. Also featured on this album are a terrific quasi-psychedelic raga instrumental ("The Behemoth"), a great folk rock original ("Three For Love"), one of their very best punky originals ("I'll Make You Sorry"), and an excellent extended

version of "Hey Joe" with a raga guitar rave-up. Alas, these stellar tracks are unfortunately followed by several surprisingly lame covers, e.g., "Peepin' and Hidin'", "Tomorrow's Going to be Another Day", and — gag! — "Spoonful". Mercifully, the LP ends with some well-chosen bonus numbers, including the superior 45 version of "Gospel Zone" and a very fine rendition of "I'm Gonna Make You Mine". In short, despite the presence of several throwaway cuts, "Back Door Men" is eminently worth purchasing simply because the rest of the songs are just so damn good. It should also be pointed out that the sound quality on these particular Sundazed reissues is excellent, as usual.

One final SHADOWS OF KNIGHT anecdote. In 1978 or so I was attending a punk rock show at Bookie's 870 Club in Detroit, a former drag bar which began to feature cool underground r'n'r shows on a regular

basis during that period. One night I was there to see some British punk group, perhaps 999, when I spotted someone in the audience who looked very familiar. As I moved closer to get a better look, I was astounded to see none other than Jim Sohns, the former lead vocalist of the SHADOWS. Being a belligerent fellow who also happened to be as drunk as a skunk, I couldn't help noticing that he'd gained some weight, so I wasn't quite sure it was really him. Finally, I asked him outright if he was indeed Jim Sohns, and he at once acknowledged that he was. I then tactlessly blurted out "what happened to you?", to which he laughingly responded, "Hey, I've been getting older". I immediately felt like a total asshole, so I hastened to admit that the SHADOWS OF KNIGHT had been one of my very favorite bands ever since the mid-60s, and that his snotty vocal style was one of the main reasons why. I hope he forgave me for my initial rudeness — for which I now belatedly and publicly apologize — and that he took my complimentary remarks at face value. Because I really did mean them. And besides, since then I've been getting older too, so I know how he must have felt. Unfortunately, try as we might, none of us can stay "young and beautiful" forever.

In any event, now that I've finally found a new place to live and have set up my record player at home, I plan to review some of the post-77 punk and power pop vinyl reissues in upcoming columns. ⊕

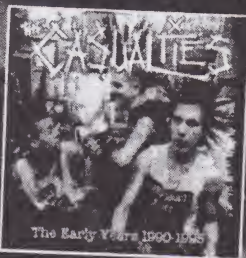


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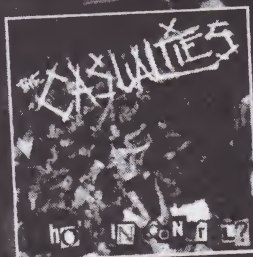
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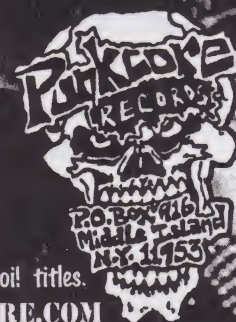
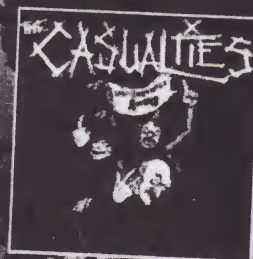
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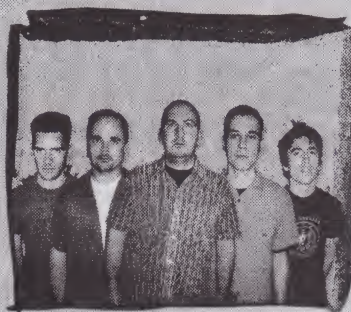
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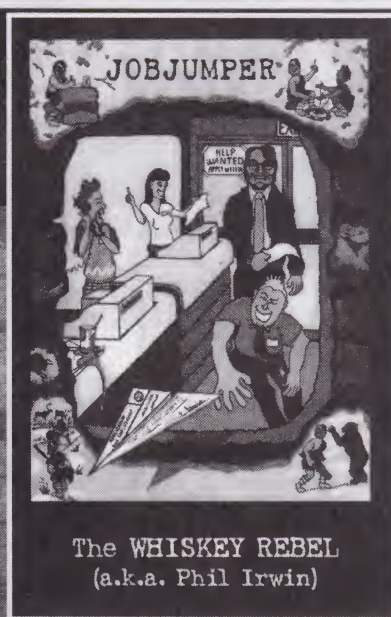


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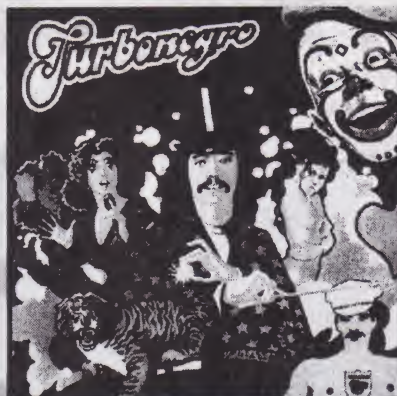
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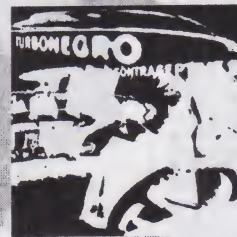
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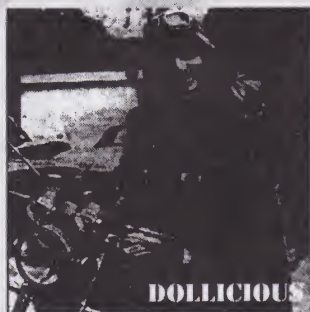
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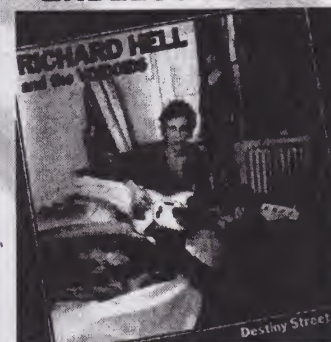
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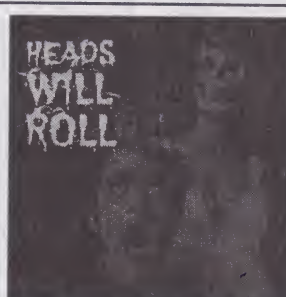
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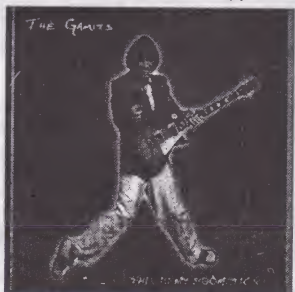
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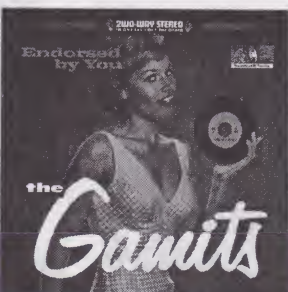
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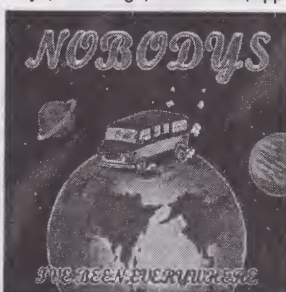
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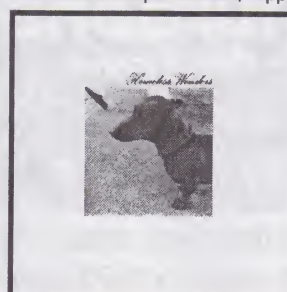
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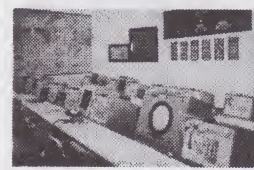
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ZERO BOYS



VICIOUS CIRCLE

ZERO BOYS



Livin' In The 80's

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The week before I turned 20, I decided it was time to overthrow the government.

I'd been thinking along those lines for a while, but it all became clear that third weekend of October, 1967, when I went to Washington, DC to lay siege to the Pentagon. The Vietnam War was at its height, and passions were running high.

We left Ann Arbor in the middle of the night, nine of us packed into a 1957 Chevy station wagon piloted by a local SDS activist. I fueled up for the journey with a potent mixture of LSD and Robitussin. Obviously I didn't get much sleep. I vaguely remember puking out the window when the constant up and down of the Pennsylvania mountain backroads got too much for me. We stayed off the turnpike, partly to save money, partly because any half-conscious cop could have found any number of reasons to bust our asses.

The only image I vividly recall from the trip was driving through Wheeling, West Virginia. The blinking stoplights, the neon glow from the late-night honky-tonks, the blast of country music from a passing pickup: there was no escaping the sense that we'd entered a different America, one that felt both threatening and exotic. My drug-addled mind added another twist: it seemed as though we had driven into a photographic negative. Everything, the colors, the contrasts, was reversed. I tried closing my eyes, but it didn't make any difference.

We got to Washington the next afternoon, just as the first protesters were crossing the Potomac and marching up to the Pentagon. I forgot how tired I was and went running to the front. There were two plans of action. One, hatched by the hippies, was to form a human chain around the Pentagon and, by force of vibes or karma or whatever, cause it to levitate, thus demonstrating the moral superiority of our cause. The other, advocated by the more conventional politicians of the New Left, was to blockade the building, stopping anyone from getting in or out, and thus impeding the conduct of the war.

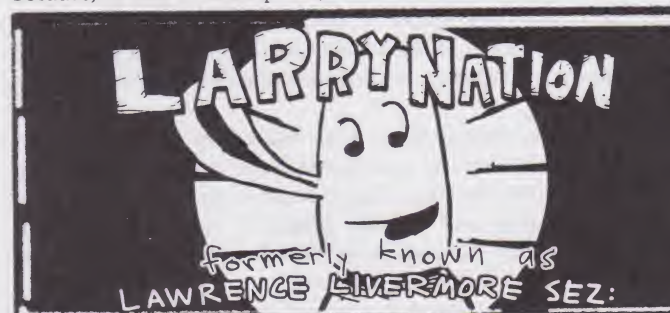
Allen Ginsberg and others of the cosmic beardo brigade were up there with their love beads and Buddhist chants. No matter how many drugs I'd taken, I wasn't expecting the building to suddenly lift off, but the Army was taking no chances. They'd surrounded the place with troops, many of them with bayonets fixed on the end of their rifles. There was a brief stand-off between the protesters and the troops; it was then that a kid from Berkeley starting sticking flowers into gun barrels. Somebody snapped a photo which was to become one of the more famous images of the 60s protest movement.

But peace and love soon gave way to pushing and shoving. There was a series of small explosions. Billowing clouds of smoke enveloped me, and suddenly I couldn't breathe. It was my first experience with tear gas, doubly terrifying because I had no idea what was happening. People were screaming and running, and as the smoke lifted, I saw why: troops were charging into the crowd, striking out with both gun butts and bayonets. The braver protesters tried to stand their ground, but they didn't last long. Me, I ran like hell until I was a good half mile away.

But there were way too many of us to be easily dispersed, and the crowd drifted back onto the Pentagon lawn. As dusk fell, bonfires sprung up everywhere. People milled about, spreading rumors and hatching plots. There was a new militancy in the air. If you greeted someone with

the traditional V-sign for peace, you were likely to be answered with the clenched fist of revolution. For a moment it was almost possible to believe, to imagine that it was 1776 all over again, that the old order was about to fall away, that by morning we'd be marching on the White House and Congress. A mile away, and across the rest of the land, millions of Americans drifted off into safe suburban dreamland, oblivious to our dreams of glory.

Midnight brought no further signs of imminent revolution, and I was getting cold and bored. I set off back into Washington, strolled past the White House and down the Mall. At the far end, I was joined by two young girls. They couldn't have been more than 13 or 14, but they'd hitchhiked down from Baltimore because, as one of them put it, "We heard this was where it was



all happening." Their political convictions were as skimpy as their outfits, which involved a t-shirt, miniskirt, and the opinion that the Vietnam War was "kind of crappy." I teased them for being silly teenyboppers, and they made fun of my shaggy hair and army surplus clothes.

An old station wagon pulled up and the driver got out. He was tall, a couple years older than me, and a little too straight-looking for my liking. "Are you all with the demonstration? Do you need a place to crash tonight?" I didn't like the way he looked at the girls, and said, "No, thanks." But they weren't about to walk the streets all night, so they hopped in the car, and I thought I'd better come along just in case.

He was a student at Georgetown University, and worked part time for Senator Fulbright of Arkansas, one of the first mainstream politicians to speak out against the war. I wasn't clear whether it was the Senator himself or another of his aides, but somebody with a large house in the Virginia suburbs had offered its basement to house out-of-town protesters. My suspicions were allayed when we got there. It was a big slumber party, with at least 30 kids spread out across the floor. The guy who'd brought us there started talking to me about his ambitions, about how he was going to go into politics and make sure nothing like Vietnam could ever happen again.

He took me into the office, where he worked, and I was surprised to see a picture of him with President John F. Kennedy. "That was when I was 16," he said. "It was a student government thing. I was chosen to represent Arkansas and got to meet the President. I'm prouder of that picture than anything else I own." I said I was impressed and went to sleep. I didn't think any more about it until 25 years later when a tall guy

Billowing clouds of smoke enveloped me, and suddenly I couldn't breathe. It was my first experience with tear gas, doubly terrifying because I had no idea what was happening.

HIT SQUAD

from Arkansas who graduated from Georgetown University, worked for Senator Fulbright, and at the age of 16 got his picture taken with John F. Kennedy was elected President of the United States.

But I digress. After Washington, everything was different, for me, for the radical movement, for the country. Just as it had on the Pentagon lawn, talk was changing from reform to revolution. True, only a relative handful of us fanatics genuinely believed a successful revolution could come about in the USA, but there were enough people making enough noise to seriously frighten the bourgeoisie.

The inner cities were already out of control: for four straight summers there'd been riots in the black ghettos, with much loss of life and enormous property damage. The previous summer, the police and National Guard had been unable to restore order in Detroit, and the Army had to be brought in. If the students and hippies could pull off the same thing in our own ghettos, we reasoned, the country could soon be ungovernable.

Although we were ostensibly left wing, many of us Marxists, we sort of forgot about the workers, who of course made up the overwhelming majority of the country. We kind of had to forget about them, since many of them hated our guts, and very few supported us. Even those who were foursquare against the war thought (with some justification) that we were a bunch of undisciplined nuts.

Demonstrations got smaller and more violent. There were riots, some over issues, some just for the hell of it, in college towns across America, culminating in the 1970 killings of unarmed students at Kent State and Jackson State, which in turn provoked the most savage riots yet. The cause was lost, anyone could see that. The war, though it would grind on for five more years, became less of an issue as politicians turned against it and the Selective Service System was jiggered so that fewer white middle-class kids were drafted. The Me Decade had dawned, and the revolution fad was over, soon to be replaced by energy crises, disco, and massive drug consumption.

But not everyone saw it that way. There were diehards who would go on planting bombs and robbing banks well into the 70s, the last gasp being the nutcases of the Symbionese Liberation Army of Patty Hearst fame. I might have gone down that road myself. Until 1970 or so, I still believed in revolution, still silently cheered when a bomb went off in a draft board or bank. During 1969 I met a girl who was part of the Weather Underground, a splinter group from the old SDS which had devoted itself to "bringing the war home" to America.

Some of the Weathermen were completely bonkers, for example, Bernadine Dohrn, who praised the Charles Manson murders as a "revolutionary act," but this girl, Diana Oughton, seemed the soul of reason even as she raged against the system and all its works. And she was beautiful. Incredibly so. I instantly fell in love with her, and spent as much time as I could with her as she tried to organize a student strike on the Eastern Michigan University campus. It didn't come off, neither the strike nor my hoped-for romance, but the following term, all hell

broke loose on campus and in the surrounding streets. I was living in a squat at the time, just across the street, and I celebrated the onset of the riot with (surprise, surprise) a large dose of LSD. Panic ensued, and I headed back into the squat and hid behind some furniture.

The door burst open. It was one of my fellow squatters, Len, recently returned from Vietnam. Nice guy, if a little rough around the edges. He'd been hit in the face with something, and was bleeding heavily from the mouth. He looked frantically about, presumably for something to stem the flow of blood, but didn't notice me. Suddenly, my mind shifted gears and entered a parallel reality. Forgotten was the riot; in this world, civilization had irretrievably broken down and people had been reduced to cannibalism. Len, his face still dripping blood from his last meal, was looking for fresh meat. Me.

Perhaps I shouldn't have drawn anything from this episode other than the obvious, that the middle of a riot is not the best place to take LSD, but it had a powerful impact on me. Though I wasn't able to articulate it yet, I sensed that my post-apocalyptic vision wasn't purely hallucination, that the "revolution" we'd been dreaming about had a heavily nihilistic and destructive streak to it and was never likely to come to a happy end.

I moved back to California and drifted away from politics. Living in West Berkeley, I missed much of the violence that was erupting on Telegraph and the UC campus, and buried myself in playing piano and reading. True, the Black Panther Party had one of its houses virtually across the street, but apart from an occasional police raid, our neighborhood was quiet. Two miles away and already I was forgetting the revolution.

I remembered it all too well, though, when I picked up a copy of *Time* magazine and saw Diana Oughton's face staring back at me. She looked more beautiful than ever, but now she was dead. She and two other kids had blown themselves up while making bombs in a Greenwich Village townhouse belonging to one of their rich parents. That did it for me. I never seriously considered revolution again, at least not as a solution to

any of America's problems. It had been a big, elaborate game, fueled by adolescent fantasies and copious amounts of LSD. Now people were dying, stupidly, pointlessly, for a cause that was lost before it even began.

Revolutions, successful ones anyway, are mass movements. The great mass of American people did not want one, did not see the need for one. Instead, you had a tiny group of over-the-top idealists, many of them from the most privileged

strata of society, attempting to violently impose their program on a public which had little understanding and less appreciation of what they stood for. When it was all over, the rich kids like Billy Ayers and Bernadine Dohrn got off almost scot-free. Their rich dads fixed it for them. The poor and working class revolutionaries, especially the black ones, didn't fare so well. A few of them are still in prison. Lots of them are dead.

But why all this talk about revolution, anyway? If you hear the word "revolutionary" today, it's more likely to refer to a new brand of carpet cleaner or mouthwash than to overthrowing the government. For the most part, at least.

***Until 1970 or so, I still
believed in revolution,
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LARRY LIVERMORE

But the other week I found myself in Paddington Station awash in a veritable sea of junior Che Guevaras, or, more precisely, kids wearing his image on their t-shirts and bags and badges. I realized that they must be coming from the Reading Festival, which had featured Rage Against The Machine, a highly political rap-metal band that has adopted the famous Che image (one of the world's most instantly recognizable, right up there with Coca-Cola) as one of its logos. They must be making a fortune (and they certainly wouldn't be the first) peddling Che memorabilia. I'm sure it's only a matter of time before the erstwhile revolutionary pops up on a bar of soap or as the namesake of his own ISP. But to give RATM their due, I don't think they're using Che as a commercial ploy. Based on everything I've heard and read about them, they genuinely admire Che Guevara and want to hold him up as a role model for today's youth.

And I thought, here we go again. No matter how sincere, no matter how idealistic RATM may be (and I think they are, even if I do find their music unlistenable and their politics naff beyond belief), it's the same story all over again: upper middle class kids playing at revolution and playing fast and loose with the truth. Because the truth is, Che Guevara was no hero. In fact, he was yet another upper middle class adventurer who was more interested in fighting than in governing, who summarily executed hundreds of perceived "class enemies," and got a lot more innocent and/or ignorant people killed in misbegotten and abortive revolutions in Africa and Bolivia.

Yes, he played an important part in the Cuban revolution, which despite its murderous excesses, wasn't completely bad (depends on whether you see political freedom as a fair tradeoff for improved health care and education). But that was mostly down to Castro; Guevara wanted to keep pushing Cuba to more and more leftist extremes, trying on ideologies the way some people try on clothes, until even Castro had had enough and sent him packing.

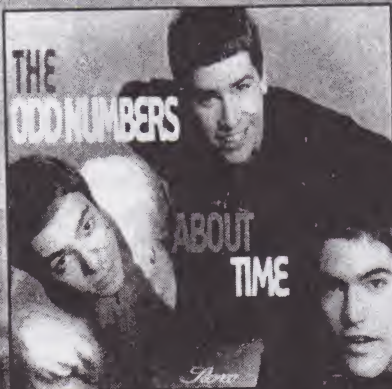
What bewilders me is that RATM must know this. Go to their website and you'll find a "Recommended Reading List" that, to my surprise,

contained not just the usual ideological tracts, but a broad overview of history and literature. Read everything on it and you'll not only be better read than me, you'll have pretty much the equivalent of a college degree. So why are these apparently bright guys hawking this image of a failed revolutionary? Why do their songs and website rhetoric echo so much of that 60s madness which saw some of our best and brightest young people devote themselves to destroying anything that smacked of Western civilization? Why are they romanticizing, almost fetishizing such ersatz black "leaders" as Mumia Abu Jamal, much as their 60s predecessors did with the thuglike and murderous Black Panthers?

I know this is where I'm supposed to answer my own question, but I just don't know. Maybe it's just boredom. Things have been a little too quiet around here, so why don't we, um, start a revolution? Maybe upper middle class kids lead such unchallenging, vacuum-packed, air-conditioned and blow-dried lives that anything promising to break the monotony of having it so easy looks exciting, even if it means destroying the system they feed off of.

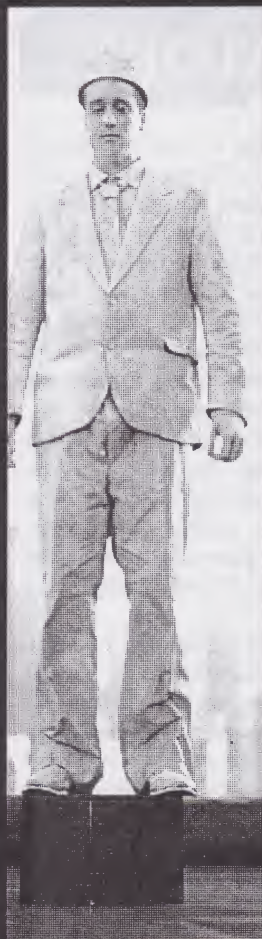
What I do know is that I've seen this movie before, and I already know how it comes out. Some people have praised RATM for singing about substantive issues instead of the nihilistic crap that their fellow rap-metal artists focus on, but I'd almost rather see some impressionable teenager thrashing around to Limp Bizkit, because any kid with an IQ surpassing double digits is going to quickly outgrow the latter. Limp Bizkit may mindlessly urge kids to "break stuff," but ultimately I think RATM are far more nihilistic. They don't just want to break "stuff," they want to break everything. The political views they advocate have failed spectacularly nearly everywhere they've been tried. Instead of learning from history, they want to repeat it. It's a death trip, baby, and I'm not going along for the ride. ⊕

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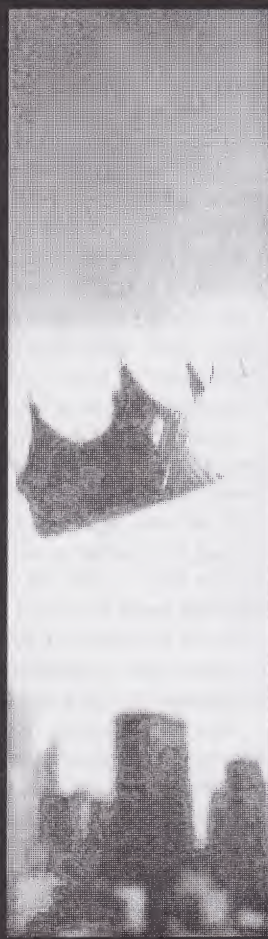
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REFUSED
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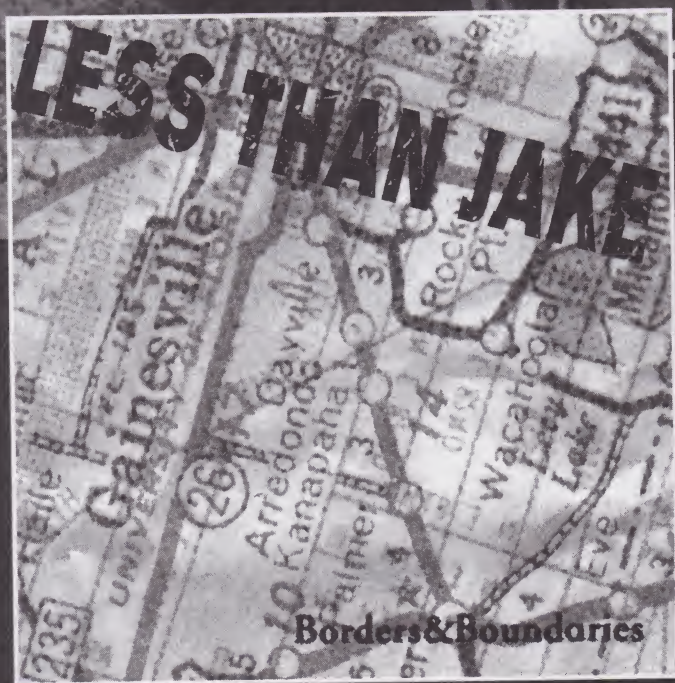
Check Out former Refused Singer Dennis Lyxzén's New Band THE (INTERNATIONAL) NOISE CONSPIRACY & Their New Album "Survival Sickness"



REFUSED
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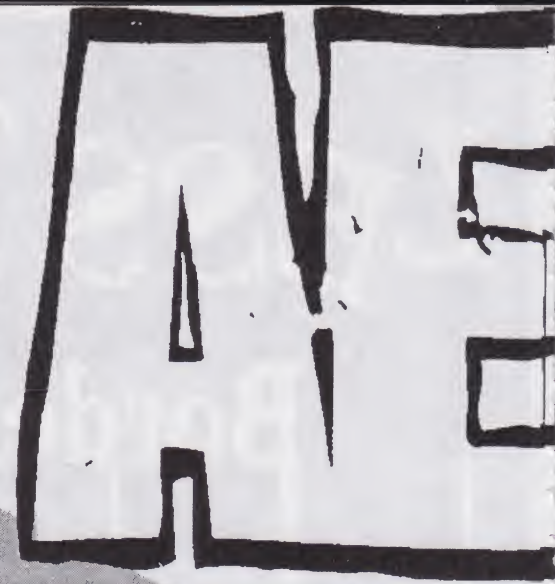
LESS THAN JAKE

Borders & Boundaries



Produced by:
Steve Kravac
& Less Than Jake

Mixed by:
Bill Stevenson
Stephen Egerton
Jason Livermore



WHO WILL SAVE LOOKING FOR ANSWERS

Well, well, well. Why was it again that we punks are supposed to hate Spain? Right, I remember now: Bullfighting. What most people don't get is the point behind the bloodshed and torture-animals-for-fun thing — it's all about showing you have bigger cojones than the bull. How you're supposed to display your machismo in funny hats, Christopher Street Day Parade costumes, white socks and ballerina slippers is beyond me, but I guess that's just me. But then again... maybe the bullfighting officials came to a similar realization when their male toreros had their asses kicked by a woman torero — so it seems they just had to ban her before she showed them up to be the bunch of pansies they really are.

The fact remains that Spanish women seem to have bigger balls than their male counterparts, and I'm not talking about transvestites here, either. If you need any proof of that, just put on an AEROBITCH record and listen. Hearing is believing.



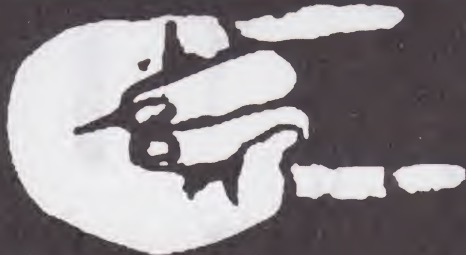
ROBITCH



ROCK 'N' ROLL?

WITH AEROBITCH

by Tobias Schazmann and Jürgen Bäuerle



The two times I saw AEROBITCH last year were easily among the best shows I've ever seen, they looked like they were on a one-band mission to put the fun and the energy back into punk rock. On top of that, being the punk rock renaissance people they are, they are trying to educate the ignorant Spanish masses to the pleasures of Rock 'n' Roll by means of their label, distribution and magazine.

Meet Laura Bitch, Queen of Rock, she-who-hath-bigger-balls-than-thou, and Mario (a.k.a. Rockaway Bitch), her devoted slave. The interview was done at the end of 1999 at Laura's place in Madrid, home of Punch Records and Evil Distro.

It seems that people are fed up with the oversupply of touring bands and are looking for something fresh. A lot of people liked the way you did your tour, like "just get in the van and go". It seemed really honest.

M: We're conscious of that. First of all: we're no rock stars, we are a very small band and we are aware of the fact that we have a number of opportunities you should make good use of. When we planned the tour we knew that we could lose money, which fortunately didn't happen, but we knew it could be that way, so we saved up as much as we could and played every show like there was a bloodthirsty mob on our back, just like always. We play every show like it was our last, we think people always deserve the maximum for their money.

It seems this spirit is often lacking nowadays;

sure there are bands that tour to have fun, but also for the bucks, especially in Germany, in the middle of Europe, you get bands touring a couple of times a year. They have a potent label behind them and people buy stuff blindly even if the bands are only mediocre.

M: We're lucky to have our own label, so we know exactly what we're selling. Many bands have the wool pulled over their eyes or fool themselves into believing that they will sell 10,000 copies of their record. We see our sales figures every day, so we know we sell little, but in punk circles it has always been this way, it's not the numbers that count, but reaching the right people, people who will appreciate it. There are also bands that are really punk rock and still sell a lot of records, but I think as soon as you start to sell a lot you lose control of things. We do everything ourselves, from covers to booking shows, promotion. We don't have a sound guy, no choreographer, either, which is a pity really, come to think about it — we just don't have the money. We know quite well what is possible and what isn't. When we played in Europe we couldn't believe how many people came to the shows, often more than in Spain, because here people also prefer going to see a Scandinavian band rather than e.g. a German band. It happens everywhere, people just go along with the fashion, I guess. Laura organizes shows here in Madrid and you have bands that sell the same number of records as us and then act as if they would do the audience a favor by playing, when it should be the other way around. They come here with their rock star aura, don't unload their stuff themselves and so on. I just don't get it, I don't understand how a punk band can come across like that. When you're a star like Mick Jagger, you're already far removed from reality, at a point when you're a multi-millionaire, you sell out arenas, you live in a world full of cocaine and women who can't wait to hop on top of you, you cease to know what's real or not — but with a little band that has to sleep in the van — come on!

Tell us about the Spanish punk scene and history.

M: Well, punk had a bit of a late start in Spain. There are bands that could be considered sort of pioneers, e.g. LA BANDA TRAPERA DEL RIO who played hard music before '77, they were already really wild around '75/'76, in the phase of transition from Francoism to democracy, a very provocative band that set itself apart from the Andalusian pseudo-hippies and their progressive rock. There was no band that was more extreme, especially considering the time, Franco did die in '75 but censorship had still to be abolished. Those guys didn't really give a fuck and their first LP was like an epidemic breaking out in Catalonia, but still the whole thing was rather limited.

Then in 1980/81 came punk, beginning with the explosion of the "Rock radical vasco", also in Madrid there were punks, but mostly trendies who watched everything that happened in England closely and mainly just wanted to be cool. There were real punk bands, but it never had the honesty of the Basque country, which the Basque country has retained until today, with squats, concert venues, people who organize stuff, support bands. In Barcelona, on the other hand, very few people go to punk shows, unless it's the HELLACOPTERS or TURBONEGRO. They have a bigger hardcore and mod scene there. In Madrid there has always been a big R'n'R tradition, but punk and R'n'R seem to be dying slowly, as fewer and fewer young people go to the shows, they're more into melodic hardcore, it spoils the whole R'n'R scene, hahaha.

When I started listening to music I also liked the first BAD RELIGION LP, but I also wanted to listen to bands like BLACK FLAG or also the SEX PISTOLS and the DAMNED. Go to a melody-core concert nowadays — those fruitcakes don't have a fucking clue who the DEAD KENNEDYS or the DAMNED are! Many youngsters come here to buy records and they don't give a fuck about anything but the new NOFX or MILLENCOLIN record. Sometimes, however, and those are the

**"SO WE
IRON MAIDEN
WITH OUR
WE DON'T
WHAT PEOPLE
WE WANT TO**



beautiful moments, a clever, interested young kid comes along and asks for something different and you tell them "Hey, give the REAL KIDS record a listen, you'll like it!" because in my opinion everybody should like it.

So AEROBITCH and EVIL DISTRO fight for the true spirit of Rock 'n' Roll?

M: Yeah, right. Fuck off. We play R'n'R, and that didn't just come into the world like that, before it there was blues and I think you should know that and be interested in it. Maybe I am obsessed by this idea, but you shouldn't just sit there apathetically, but try and follow things you're interested in, but what I see today — and I'm not that old — is that the kids are inundated with records and background information. When I was fifteen I had to follow everything step by step and got into it more naturally. Here in Spain popular American bands, like e.g. BAD RELIGION weren't that well known, maybe in the rest of Europe, but not here. I bought the record, liked it, but I had no background information at all, so I had to go and look and got to know other things that way. It wasn't like "I want that record. There you go." The youngsters today don't walk into a record store without a clue and have to ask or maybe buy at their own risk, which is a pity really, because that's the beauty of it and not. "You have to have this or that record." Everything is nicely pre-digested, in small bits. After two years they hop off the melody-core bandwagon and don't give a fuck about the whole punk thing.

Ivar, our other guitar player is only 18 and a very inquisitive, restless young guy. He comes from a metal background and has always liked stuff like IRON MAIDEN, but he, just like my younger brother, is always looking for something new, which makes me happy. They don't listen to the "this is the record to have" rap, but do their own thing instead.

Isn't that maybe also due to your influence?

M: Possibly... You have to have the general

interest though, else it's no use. You also have to be open towards other musical styles, I listen to all kinds of stuff.

L: (from the background) You wouldn't believe what I listen to!

M: Yep, Laura really listens to a wide variety of musical styles. "Live at San Quentin" by Johnny Cash is one of my favorite records. Everybody in the band listens to punk 'n' roll, but also lots of other stuff, Ignacio even likes Jazz!

In the meantime Laura has finished her work chores for the day and has joined in, the topic turns to what labels AEROBITCH have been given and what their position in the Spanish punk scene is.

L: Jesus, they've called us everything under the sun, maybe not outside of Spain, but here... good grief!

M: But that happens everywhere, you're always exposed to criticism, everywhere there are people who only want to fuck you over, but "I sweat that out of my dick" (literal translation). We know what we like and don't like, and we know that exactly. Everyone of us does their thing, no problem there... Laura doesn't like heavy metal, the others do... so we ended up on an IRON MAIDEN tribute compilation, with our version of "Holy Smoke". We don't really care what people are gonna say or think, WE want to do it, so there... let them slag us off.

We talked about this before: in the general perception you have this cliché of the Spanish macho with two hard cojones like those of the bull in the Osborne brandy advertisements, when we saw you live it seemed that you had the biggest pair of bollocks in the band.

L: (laughing) Yes, that would be nice, but the guys wouldn't like that.

M: It's true, she's the one who keeps things

going.

L: Of course I take care of many things, but I don't "rule" the band.

You don't conform to the image of the Iberian macho with the little woman in the kitchen. It's rather impressive how you're in control of the boys...

L: Easy, easy — what Mario said is nonsense, because in the band everyone has the same right to open their mouth. It is true though that I arrange shows, like for instance the "European Tour", but when it comes down to making decisions, we have to make them together, of course. The same goes for "making music", writing songs etc., it's all a team effort. But with things like promotion, interviews and concerts, I take care of that together with Mario and Eusebio, our faithful PUNCH records/EVIL distribution co-worker.

What am I going to say about your cliché image of Spain? Honestly, I think there is still a whole lot of the so-called Machismo, but Spain is not only Bullfighting and Flamenco and the good wife at home in the kitchen, but a girl group or a girl in the band is still viewed rather skeptically, much more so than with a purely male group.

What puzzles me is that it seems that there is a large number of girl groups in Spain, which seems strange...

M: There aren't that many, the thing is that girl groups here in Spain get a lot of press coverage, just because there are so few of them.

L: At the moment there are only very few in the area of Punk. On NO TOMORROW, the label which issues the most Punk bands, there is not a single woman.

M: On MUNSTER Records you have the PUSSYCATS and on our label Punch there's AEROBITCH.



**ENDED UP ON AN
TRIBUTE COMPILATION,
VERSION OF 'HOLY SMOKE'.
REALLY CARE
ARE GONNA SAY AND THINK,
DO IT, SO THERE..."**

L: But a girl band or a girl in the band is still something rare or strange... for example I always have guys coming up to me who want to help me carrying amps. They think because you are a girl they do you a favor... and with Bitch the Kid, the little girl's blouse, no one seems to care...

But when you start to sing, those guys drop their jaws... which leads us to the next, rather delicate question: there seems to be a rather great demand for transvestites here in Spain and consequently there are also quite a few of them around... well, Senora Laura Bitch, are you absolutely sure you're a woman?

L: Hahaha, I don't know, I don't know. All I know is that I have a rough voice and a lot of anger in me (laughs).

So the keep-fit program for your voice is gargling with bleach on a daily basis?

L: Well, when I was little — and I only found this out much, much later — they called me "the truck driver" at a friend's place. "Your friend, the truck driver's on the phone again"... I was 13 at the time and I guess the whole thing would have upset me badly...

M: What bugs Laura is the fact that people say

you have to drink a lot of whiskey to be able to sing rough and well, and she doesn't like whiskey.

L: I hate whiskey... I love vodka! But I had to realize that whiskey is the business for taking care of your voice and so I get pissed occasionally before shows... no, really, I've tried everything... olive oil, Tabasco, every perversion under the sun, to be able to get through a couple of shows in a row, and whiskey, I'm sorry to say, works best... the others believe I only want to get drunk, but if I wanted to drink "con placer", it would have to be vodka, but whiskey gives you that nice warm feeling in the throat.

Slight change of topic: where did you play on your "European Tour"?

M: Mainly Germany, Holland, oh no; we only spent two days smoking there...

L: Belgium, France and Spain of course. Our "best" experience was in Ulm/Germany. It was one of those shows that were booked in a rather hectic way as we had a date left and we just wanted to play, no matter where... so we were supposed to play this Spanish fiesta with free sangria at a place called "Don Bosco Club"; that was all we were told, which was sort of strange because two days before that show we played a good show in Stuttgart, which is close to Ulm, and people were like "Don Bosco Club??? No idea!". So the day after that we were in Solingen and after a six-hour drive we found ourselves outside the "Don Bosco Club", a nice little house with a garden and I thought to myself "well, this looks like the typical nerd house on an American campus". When we went inside there was the Backstreet Boys on the sound system and the poster for the show said "Living la vida loca with Aerobitch", just picture that...

M: Inside there were only 16 year old... so we did our sound check, just like always "S-A-T-A-N-A-S! 6-6-6!" and we started to realize that they were looking at us in a funny way, somehow terrified... so when we started playing 21 out of 25 people went outside, everyone except the sound guy, the bar guy and three rock'n'rollers who had come to see us... later we were told that the "Don Bosco Club" is a catholic youth center...

But you played the whole set?

L: The whole set and much more.

M: I think it was the longest show we've ever played.

L: When the people who had waited outside in the garden realized we were finished, they started coming back in. When we saw that, we thought "Come on, another encore"... and the whole bunch went out again... what fun! It

was great.

Had you known in advance that it was a catholic youth club, would you have played anyway?

L + M: Probably not... (they look at each other) ...still... yes! Yes! Yes!

Which somehow leads us to the topic of Black Metal and especially "Lords Of Chaos", what do you think about it, and of Michael Moynihan's way of presenting it?

M: First of all, I think the way LOC is written is rather neutral, that's why I don't understand the whole polemic in *Hit List*, especially about Moynihan and what movement he's a part of, and so on, especially the accusation of fascism. It seemed to me that his writing was neutral and well researched.

Do you think the whole book is really neutral or more and more taking sides?

M: Sometimes I get the impression that Moynihan tries to justify the whole thing. You can't help realizing that he has no sympathies for Christianity whatsoever. In the course of the book it seems he gets into the matter more and more, but to me the whole thing doesn't seem scandalous in any way. Sometimes he tries to explain things that have no explanation, or don't need one. He gave the whole movement a kind of poetic mysticism, which I don't really see myself, either. The whole story and its protagonists look like a small bunch of nutcases to me, plain and simple — a small group of people with ideologies, the thinkers so to speak, who were and are very much involved. The rest is made up of people who want to identify with something and picked a shocking genre, namely Black Metal, to do that, a movement on the fringe of society.

Do you think the whole thing is dangerous or just childish?

M: I do think that it's dangerous...

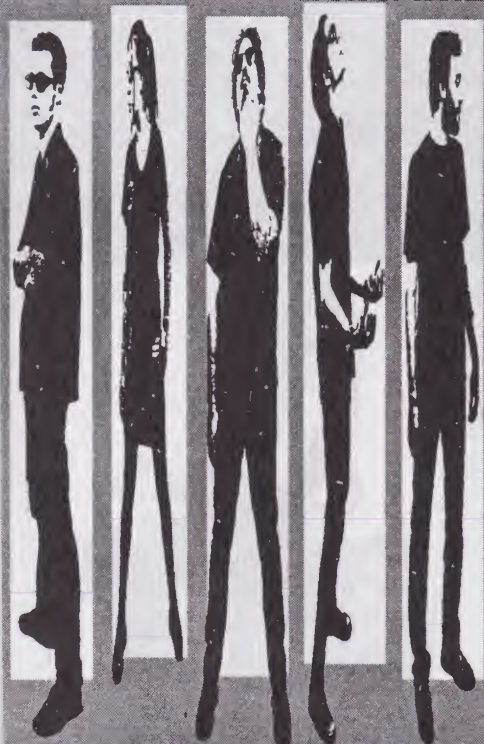
L: Well, I haven't read the book yet, but you could see it with the Scandinavian BM bands; it has shown that like with any kind of extremism as soon as someone takes the violence to a point where he attacks and kills someone, then I call it fucking dangerous. I don't know, in the Spanish Black Metal scene it seems they don't start killing each other like crazy...

M: ...but there's also been trouble here.

L: Just pure silliness!

M: No, also attacks and not just minor incidents. The guy who put out our first 7" laughed at one of the first Black Metal guys in corpse paint, that was years ago... well, you have this painted something come up to you,

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you just can't help laughing. The BM guy pulled out a knife and held it to his throat. What puzzles me however is how this movement developed from a band like Venom into what happened in Scandinavia later on. Venom, who I like very much, were rather "innocent" in their provocation and basically just enjoyed beer and women. Their provocation was already strong and shocking, but there was nothing really "evil" behind it. How do you get this really extremist scene in Norway and later on in Germany from that? I think that for the largest part the people involved had a great urge to identify with something, as they were isolated and lonely, and then found this unique, powerful BM genre, an extreme scene with a shocking ideology. What worries me most is not the church burning, but the tendency towards fascism and racism.

But you do also play around with satanic and other symbolism on your covers and posters — where do you draw the line?

L: Groups like the DEAD BOYS and the SEX PISTOLS used the swastika and screamed "Heil Hitler". That kind of provocations are fine by me, but I wouldn't do it like that myself.

M: You have to keep in mind that groups like the DEAD BOYS or the PISTOLS belonged to another time and another scene.

L: I prefer the direct provocation, for example calling the drooling wankers in the first row "hijo de puta", rather than something that could be misunderstood.

M: Ideologically, we're all rather left-wing, some more than others, we don't talk about that a whole lot, though.

Would you put Elvis with a swastika on his forehead on a cover?

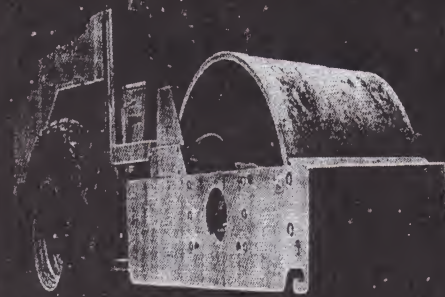
L: With a swastika: no, with an iron cross: yes.

M: Using iron crosses has got us into a lot of trouble in the past. Here in Spain the fascist dictatorship isn't just a distant memory, so the threshold of tolerance in leftist (punk) circles is rather low. One time I wore the iron cross visibly some SHARP skins chased me and wanted to beat me up and I had to do a big deal of justifying to talk myself out of that.

How did you do that? Or, how do you explain someone like that why you wear it?

M: Because it is not an exclusively fascist symbol, but simply a military symbol. I do like the powerful military aesthetic, among other things: the art of the Soviet Union, as well as that of fascism and of war in general. I do clearly separate the aesthetic from the Nazi ideology. I have my own clear ideology for myself and in the areas of aesthetic and art

AEROBITCH



STEAMROLLIN'

North Shore Bitch • Tazewell Bitch • Laura Bitch • Rockaway Bitch • Bitch The Kid

AEROBITCH



"we did our sound check, just like always "S-A-T-A-N-A-S! 6-6-6!" and we started to realize that they were looking at us in a funny way, somehow terrified..."

I like many different things, like for instance the black paintings of Goya, the aesthetic of cars, but also military or fascist or communist aesthetic.

L: I'm not into S/M myself, but the aesthetic of this scene I do find very powerful and impressive, just like that of the military. It makes a great difference whether you use art like that or just put a bunch of flowers on the cover of your record.

The silk-screened "Blitzkrieg over Europe" poster you sold at your shows in Germany, would you use that to advertise on big billboards? Somehow your tour was like a blitzkrieg...

L + M: Yes, sure.

M: Of course, it's also a provocation, but it's not over the top. The RAMONES used the term "Blitzkrieg" enough, so it almost sounds "punk rock" now. A lot of people don't know the militaristic meaning of the term anymore, they don't connect anything with it. For me, "Blitzkrieg" defines a form of military offensive and thus I don't see it on the same level as a swastika, for example. To play around with things like the swastika I don't really see as that problematic myself, with view to people's reaction in general, what is dangerous though

is that some people could start seeing fascism as valid and harmless and start believing things they'd better not believe. Unfortunately, there are too many people who are easily impressed and don't think about things a whole lot. They might see a swastika and start getting interested and then maybe end up in something that has absolutely nothing to do with us. The Nazis here in Madrid had me quite a number of times.

L: ...not to mention your brother!

M: Exactly... they nearly killed him. I really don't find this whole shit amusing. I do reflect whether I am going to use something I like or not, but still I don't have to justify myself for the symbols I wear or use on our posters like I did in front of that horde of skinheads so they would leave me in one piece. There was a time when almost every AEROBITCH poster had an iron cross on it...

Aren't you afraid that because of people's stupidity you'll end up in a certain corner?

L: Because of the iron crosses on the posters, we had to justify ourselves a couple of times already, because members of bands we played with thought we were Nazis. Many people just think too simplistically. Of course, you have to be careful with things like that, but not anyone

using a swastika is automatically a Nazi. Unfortunately, people are just that stupid, like "You don't have a mohawk, you're not a punk". And those are exactly the same people who then go on and say "You print an iron cross on your posters, you're a Nazi" without knowing you and without looking just a tiny bit further.

M: Someone who says "You don't have a mohawk, you're not a punk", doesn't understand the first thing about punk. I got into punk because the individual was important, because the ideology was "do what you want", that's why I am interested and that's why I still love it today — not a herd of idiots with mohawks, but rather YOU and your story, your thing.

L:not what they want you to wear or think.

M: For me a punk who gets shit for his IRON MAIDEN button is much more punk than someone with EXPLOITED or GBH on his jacket... the same goes for ANTISEEN doing a cover of SKREWDRIVER's "I don't like you", from their superb first album. Yes, yes, yes, any way you look at it, the first Skrewdriver 12" is breathtaking.

L: We also sell it via mail order and know already there's going to be trouble...

M: ...back to the topic: ANTISEEN have this "Southerner" image because they're from the South of the USA, god damn it. In my opinion they're ultra-punk because they never gave a fuck what punk is supposed to be or what punks expected. They always did what they wanted to do, that's why you don't find another band like ANTISEEN. Well, RANCID VAT maybe... but there is no parallelism to ANTISEEN, they're an institution unto themselves, who never orientated themselves by others and therefore deserve respect, apart from the fact that I like them, of course. That's what I call Punk. Because of the Skrewdriver cover song and their "Southerner" image they were misunderstood by a lot of idiots. I don't think that generally speaking AEROBITCH is misunderstood. As a band we never dealt with politics, but when people ask us about that we've got our stuff together.

L: Every member of AEROBITCH is entitled to their own opinion, but as a band we didn't want any connection with politics. We make our music, have our lyrics, but we didn't want to get into that... first of all, we are five people and it's practically impossible that we should agree on everything. If we dealt with political topics, that would mean that I, as the lyricist, would be promoting my thoughts and the others wouldn't be involved in that... which is crap, so we don't do it.

M: If you don't have an absolutely clear political idea, then it basically boils down to

slogan-peddling pamphletism and you make a fool of yourself.

L: Just like almost all the "preaching" bands look ridiculous sooner or later.

M: It's so easy to deceive yourself. Just take RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE, they sell you the image of Ché Guevara as if it were a fucking doughnut. That is so lousy. I don't want to know what Ché Guevara would think if he saw those T-shirts — thousands of young idiots without a clue, who probably think the guy on the T-shirt is the singer of RATM... or if you preach about having control over your own product, like BAD RELIGION, and then leave your own great label to sign with a major.

L: I think it's alright, when bands who think they've got it all figured out preach the same thing for 15 years. I, like the others, wouldn't want to represent an ideology, which could change with all of us. A song stays with you forever and still promotes an idea, even if one or two years later you say "back then I thought that way because of this or that experience, but that has changed". No matter how you try to justify yourself, the song is cut into vinyl and the people who buy your records are going to have a certain image of you, even if this no longer holds true.

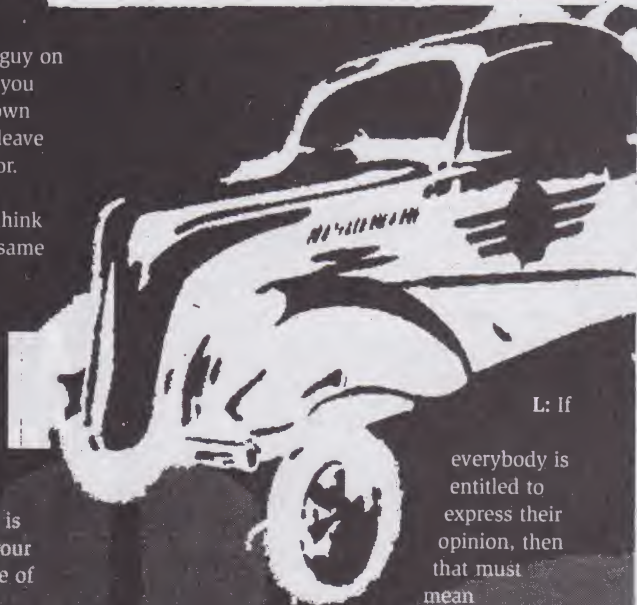
M: I think it's necessary, even inevitable, that there are bands that talk and sing about politics, as politics is a part of our life but firstly, I don't think I'm in a position to talk about politics like that, because I don't have a rigid opinion, I don't read too much on it and I'm not too well-informed and secondly, I see a lot of bands singing about politics and making utter fools of themselves. Only very few "political" bands get their message across in a good and intelligent way... VERY few.

L: Most just want to conform to a certain image, but act completely different.

What I have observed is that if people who are not really familiar with Punk and then browse through HL and see something like the "Fuck Swing" "ad", they are rather shocked, because they think "punk is left-wing and hasn't got anything to do with that Nazi-shit". Of course, WE don't really have to talk about that, as it's clear to us, but for "outsiders" this sort of provocation unfortunately looks like it's promoting Nazism. Could you imagine that punk fanzines give the opportunity to people of completely different opinions to speak out?

M: I think that would only be right. What you said about "outsiders" — we talked about that before: there still is a danger of trivializing it.

AERO



L: If

everybody is entitled to express their opinion, then that must mean

EVERYBODY, and

not just people you

think are okay. This is where censorship starts. If you really believe in freedom of expression and you don't want censorship for yourself, then you have to give other people the opportunity to speak out, even if you don't agree with what they have to say.

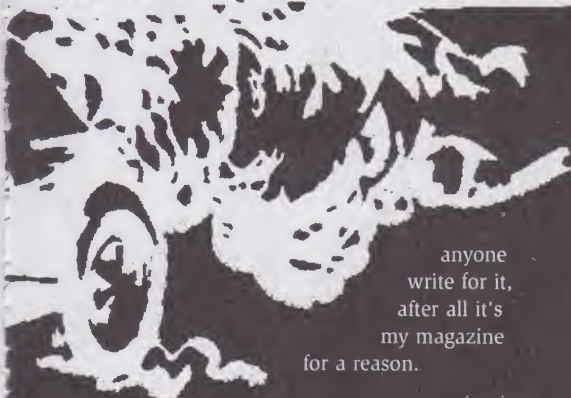
M: The best way of defeating your "enemy" is to let them speak out and thus get to know them. If someone is involved in the struggle against Nazis and wants to rid the world of right-wing thought, then they should start by reading Hitler's "Mein Kampf". The same goes for people fighting against leftist ideologies, they should read the works of Marx... I do believe in absolute freedom of speech.

So you could also have people write for your fanzine who hold completely different opinions.

L: It depends. If it's MY fanzine probably not, just because it is MY or OUR fanzine, just like when I'm doing a compilation record I don't want any bands on there which I don't like. I think it's important for those people to have a forum to express themselves, but I'm not the one who's going to give it to them.

If there was some kind of a magazine, where all kinds of people could give their opinions, then fine. But if you're doing your own mag, which we do, and put a lot of money and energy into it, then I won't have just about

BITCH



anyone
write for it,
after all it's
my magazine
for a reason.

M: Yes, Laura, but we've done it in the past and we'll probably do it again — concerning political topics however, I don't think so. On musical topics probably yes. We also had a lot of that in the past. You get labeled quite quickly when you have extreme topics in order to make them ridiculous. What is clear to us might be different for most people.

L: ...exactly the people who take everything on a surface level. If your magazine is 90% about punk-related topics and has 10% of other people giving their opinions, then it's easy for them to say "this zine is right-wing, left-wing" or whatever. Then you as the editor have to deal with the ensuing problems. I don't know what it's like in the USA with extreme literature or magazines, but putting out something like for example ANSWER ME!, which I like a lot, takes a lot of guts.

M: Both of us have all the issues and it's totally interesting for me, because reports on the margins of society have always fascinated me. That doesn't necessarily mean I like everything in it, it's more a fascination with and interest in stuff like that, as you can also gather from our respective libraries. Human beings have a natural interest in the morbid, some of us keep it inside and don't follow it, I just do. Only because I might find something repulsive doesn't mean that I don't want to know about it, or that I don't read articles on it with the greatest interest.

L: A couple of days ago a guy came around and asked me "You guys think serial killers are totally great, don't you?" I had to tell him that I don't think they're "great". I'd personally prefer that there weren't any murderers. I'm not interested in the guy who wakes up with a bad

mood and then goes and kills his wife, but people with serious psychological illnesses, even if they don't kill. The psychological background of such people in our society is interesting, how people get to be that sick. Well, quite honestly I don't want someone to think I'm possessed by the devil and then to come and do an exorcism on me, that doesn't mean that I'm not interested in the topic in general.

Anyway, the whole serial killer thing seems to have become some sort of a nerdy fashion. Hobbit Motherfuckers!

M: Yes, you're probably right there. It's kinda sad seeing Axl Rose in a Charles Manson T-shirt. Charles Manson was a hippy, first and foremost. (laughter)

So, hippies means bad guys, or what?

L: I don't like them very much, but I don't have a real explanation. They just don't give me a "good vibe", just like there are probably people you don't like particularly...

M: I don't have any tolerance for the whole hippie movement... none... nada... ZERO!!! I went through times of really hating them, nowadays I'm a little more relaxed, still I don't like them at all. You can't really imagine the extent of it here in Madrid... with all their juggling and playing flute... (laughter) Hippies... urgh! Total repulsion!

L: Now you've started him on something... how do we get him to calm back down now?

Kill a hippie for Rock 'n' Roll?

M: Killing — no, but a little prank here or there... oh yes, please.

L: If saving Rock 'n' Roll means killing people then Rock 'n' Roll — my ass. As soon as people seriously start thinking about killing people for an ideology... like kill for R'n'R, then fuck R'n'R ...kill for Punk, then fuck Punk. If you have to scream "Fuck you! Fuck you! Fuck you!" all the time to be an aggressive band, then fuck being an aggressive band...get it? No one tells me what to do, I decide for myself, thank you very much.

M: I would do quite a lot for R'n'R.

Shoot, shoot, you bad dog...

M: Well, I don't know, we play under extreme conditions, also naked, for all I care, we just try to keep R'n'R alive with the band, the label, the distribution, the fanzine.

L: Oh my god, aren't we great? The saviors of R'n'R! Ha ha ha!

M: No, but we do a lot, because we believe in it, we put on shows...

L: First of all we had to put up with a lot of shit, because we believe that you also have to give smaller bands the opportunity to play to keep the scene alive, to give them an opportunity of putting out records... to get them to play here in Madrid, let them stay at our place. There are still so many bands we like that don't have a distribution for Spain and don't have the money to come down here... well, that's what we do for good ol' R'n'R. Then they call you an idiot and you just have to swallow what is flung your way... you wouldn't believe what some bands are like, they really think they are rock stars and treat you like dirt, so that you just can't believe it — just like the thirty other people who came to see their show. You give them a place to stay and something to eat and what do you get in return?

M: We made fools of ourselves many times...

L: I don't know if that was for the sake of R'n'R or because you were totally fucked up drunk.

M: All for R'n'R!! That's why I grind this hot guitar, which in the meantime is in a sad state (and was offered as a sacrifice to the gods of Rock only one week later). My true love! That's what I believe in, that's why we play and why we keep playing. I believe in my belief in R'n'R. R'n'R is the kind of music that gives me energy. Playing with Aerobitch gives me the feeling of doing something "important". It's hard to define, but for me R'n'R is also an attitude, just like Punk. For me it's the same thing: the DEAD KENNEDYS are R'n'R and HOWLING WOLF is Punk... the same thing. To put it in simple terms: doing what you think is right and important all the time, not what they want you to believe... listening to the bands I like, not to be influenced by fashion, supporting people who you think deserve support, to live out your interests together with them. To work together and create something worthwhile even if it's tiny and small, as long as it matters to you. At the moment R'n'R is really small here in Madrid, getting smaller all the time, but — for me — as long as it's there it's worth keeping it alive.

L: What people outside of Spain normally don't know is that one of the most important reasons why things are this way is that very few people in Spain speak English. So most people can't read English magazines like in the rest of Europe.

M: That's why apart from the "big" Magazines like GEARHEAD or MOSHABLE we try to also carry smaller and also peculiar fanzines in the

distribution program, also English but mainly Spanish ones. So that the few people that are there have access to that.

About one or two years ago there was a kind of explosion of mini-fanzines, which I thought was great and which I would support in any case. The problem was that most of these "zines had stuff on the same topics or bands, so in every single one you had an interview with, say, HELLACOPTERS, which were pretty popular by that time anyway...

So, you see Spain as somehow isolated from the rest of Europe?

L: Yes, as I said, the lack of knowledge of English is a problem and isolates Spain, just like France, from the rest of Europe.

But Spanish lyrics are out of the question for you?

L: The mother of all questions, go ahead!

Good, then I won't.

L: Erm, I feel more comfortable singing in English, probably because the larger part of the bands I listen to and like is "English-speaking". It's just easier for me to write in English. English enables you to say a lot more, more easily. Just say the same thing in English and then in Spanish — Spanish is bound to be twice as long.

M: It helps that Laura's English is very good, it gets ridiculous when bands have English lyrics and haven't got a clue about the English language.

Our favorite Spanish bands do sing in Spanish, though, well, apart from some exceptions like the SIN CITY SIX, CARBONAS or SAFETY PINS, who sing in English. But take bands like NUEVO CATECISMO CATOLICO or DISIPULOS DE DIONISOS, they sing in Spanish.

L: I think it's great that they sing in Spanish, because here a good Spanish song counts much more than an English one, because people understand it. If you write a good song in English, most people will never know if it's good or bad or whatever... if you write bad Spanish lyrics then you're done for.

M: Normally we always print our lyrics, because I think it's important to be able to read the lyrics...

L: It's important to me, most of the time the others don't really care.

M: I like her lyrics, they are clear and to the point and anyone could take a dictionary and figure them out. She's really good at that.

L: Well, you've got to say that, there must be a reason why you're my boyfriend.

M: Ha, well, then I have to tell you... your lyrics suck.

The conversation goes back to fanzines, especially their new mag "evil".

What are you trying to do differently to set yourselves apart?

M: We've done some interviews already, but we still have to work on them to give them a certain edge. We're not 100% set, but ideas are there.

L: In our new mag we won't have, say, HELLACOPTERS, unless they'd say something they've never said anywhere else before. A "normal" interview with them you can find somewhere else, anyway. A band that is also featured in other Spanish "zines would have to come out with something special in EVIL.

M: The ANTISEEN interview worked out nicely... they're not very big in Spain. We don't only do interviews with bands on tour, we also contact bands... it's more work, but in most cases it's worth it. I wanted to have an interview with them already in the first issue of our old fanzine... This interview will also be in sharp contrast to a lot of other interviews in the mag... and this contrast is nice and also very important to us. Well, we don't really go looking for this contrast, we wouldn't do an interview with for example a skinhead band just to have that contrast.

L: That's not really exactly true. Just think about that orgy thing... last summer we had the opportunity of taking part in this orgy.. more as spectators, though. I really wanted to write an article on that. We heard about it because a band we are friends with was supposed to play there and we could have gone along, to see their show and also the orgy. The whole thing was a private orgy, organized by a guy from Lerida. He had this group called "X-Patrol", a large group of people who, well, fuck and there was some kind of a box with somebody in it, with peeping holes and holes for the hands, some kind of grope-'n'-look deal. They also wanted to have a "submissive" there, who sits in a cage, and who you could piss or shit on or beat...The whole thing was really extreme and sounded rather interesting to me. I really wanted to go, but Mario didn't.

So you don't really agree on such topics?

L: I do think that I am very feminist. For me that means I believe in the equality of the sexes, but I think it's absurd to condemn men based on their sex and try to gain equal rights by that. That's nonsense... just as absurd as the whole p.c. thing.

So you wanted to go to the orgy, while Mario was against it?

L: I wanted to go on condition that I could leave again at any time. I wanted to watch to be able to write an article.

M: I didn't want to go, because I don't have to see some sick guy shitting into a woman's mouth. I really don't need that. That puts me in a really bad mood.

L: But you don't have a problem watching it on video...

M: Yes, but like that... I'm not really concerned about the woman, if she does it because she likes it and gets good money for it, which I assume in this case, and she isn't forced to do it or held hostage... but that's not the point. It's about the "cool guy" who wants to show off in front of his pals and pisses into this woman's face. I didn't want to see that.

Not very surprisingly, the name G.G. ALLIN pops up.

M: I went from being a total G.G. ALLIN fanatic to looking at him with more distance. Musically I like him very much, although he also brought out a bunch of crap.

Do you see this as art in the R'n'R genre?

M: I don't believe in art. As a form of expression I do think it's interesting, and I got into it because it was so extreme. I had read a lot about him and started buying his records, but with time I developed a certain skepticism. He was a great entertainer, though, sort of an extreme Frank Sinatra. Take Marilyn Manson — that's just cheap theatrics like Alice Cooper. I like Cooper, but Marilyn Manson makes me laugh my ass off. In the seventies Alice Cooper was seen as a threat, nowadays in the 90s Marilyn Manson threatens no one, well, apart from the idiots who suck up everything anyway.

Well, he seems to be rather big here in Spain.

M: In Spain there wasn't any big fuss about him, like in the States. Spain is rather tolerant in that respect, no one stirs up a scandal about this fool. People laugh about him. My mother who is very catholic says "That guy is supposed to be the Antichrist? You can tell that to your grandmother, he's nothing but a clown! That's the fucking truth.

With G.G. it's hard to tell what was image and what wasn't. He just lived his thing. Musically, however, the first LP with the JABBERS and the last one with the MURDER JUNKIES are milestones of punk rock history, real classics.

Back to the Orgy! Mario, you would watch something like that on video, but you wouldn't drive there to see it live?

M: ...especially driving for seven hours just to

see that. I don't like travelling. If it's not about playing a show somewhere, I avoid placing my ass in a car, just to go and watch something somewhere.

Do Sex and Rock 'n' Roll belong together, Laura?

L: In a way, yes. I just don't know to what degree. I'm interested in porn, porn is fine with me. The feminist point of view that porn is bad for the image of women and degrades women. OK, fine, BUT: all the big porn stars are women, they earn a lot of money, more than in most other jobs. They do it because they want to. I mean, I do understand that point of view, but I don't really share it. So, porn is degrading. Fine! But how many "clean" jobs are much more degrading and people shut up because there are no naked women involved. That's a double standard — if you show a naked woman and show a dick, you see two people fucking then that's bad for the woman, but if a woman cleans the floor in an office where her boss treats her like shit, then that is very sad indeed but not degrading in the eyes of many people. There are so many jobs that are more degrading and humiliating, you work longer hours and get paid worse than men, in porn you earn more and on top of that maybe you also get treated better than the men. And only because they are depicted naked and fucking people say that's worse. In my book that's rather absurd.

M: There has always been this connection between Rock'n'Roll and Sex. Rock 'n' Roll, at least good Rock 'n' Roll, should have a certain primitivism, living out your lowest human emotions, sex, fun and also hate, if you will. Our lyrics aren't about having fun, although this is one of the most important things in my life. Laura concentrates more on the hateful side of life in her lyrics. Sex is good, sex is fun. I see it not only as fun but also one of the lowest instincts.

L: Rock 'n' Roll, like no other style of music, has always brought out the most natural characteristics of human life. If you are really like that as a human being, why should you deny it, that would be absurd. Humans are interested in sex, in fun. You feel hate, why not talk about that in your songs? The basic topics of Rock have always been sex, fun and then hate, revenge, fights and whatnot. I don't live out this hate all the time, but its there — why not write about it? that's why R'n'R has always been so sexualized, and that's why it makes me so horny, good ol' R'n'R (laughter)

What exactly do you, especially you Laura, like about porn?

L: For me it's less the movies and more the whole world around it, probably because it's still sort of on the margins of society and

somehow seedy and, just like other topics. It's a shady world unto itself, a taboo topic for many people.

M: Cinematically speaking, I've never been interested in porn, meaning: I've never seen a whole porn movie. God knows, I have put many a tape into the video recorder and spanked the monkey, that's what it's there for, damn it, not for the exciting plot and the great camerawork — it's all about looking at cocks and cunts.

But in the late 60s and early 70s it was really daring, a great provocation and form of expression, just like R'n'R in the 50s.

M: Yeah, just like R'n'R, porn showed society what it is really like. No matter how hard you try to fight it, you always follow what you're interested in. People badmouth porn and then you have the good family man who starts up his VCR whenever he can and whack! whack! whack!- I think you catch my drift. Attacking double standards, that's what it's about, basically just what R'n'R did.

L: In my opinion porn and R'n'R don't have that much in common. Nowadays the sexual provocation in R'n'R is just a cliché, like MONSTER MAGNET or metal bands who have porn stars in their video clips... Instead of having a good-looking girl which doesn't really impress anyone very much anymore, they have some porn kitten jumping around and there's the hullabaloo again.

M: Well, I'd like to have a porn chick in our video clip — that is if we had a clip. I think bands like NASHVILLE PUSSY are great and I don't think they do the "sex thing" to please guys. Women like them, just like Laura, have bigger balls than most guys in R'n'R. I saw them in Madrid and they didn't need fucking security — women who don't degrade themselves for a second, on the contrary, they prove that they could kick your ass anytime if they wanted to.

L: A lot of people probably won't like this: women like that show how much power a good-looking woman has over men. NASHVILLE PUSSY revel in the fact that they put their audience into this animalistic state. They can treat the guys in the front row as they please and when one of them comes too close they hit him and he'll even apologize!

M: They dominate totally — the triumph of the weaker sex!

L: I do understand that feminists want women to empower themselves by different values. Intellectually a woman is just as strong as a man, but using her sex appeal she can make a total fool of a guy. I don't think a woman has to appear unfeminine to prove that she is intellectually equal to a man. If she than can

fall back on her natural physical resources and profit from it — de puta madre! If a woman chooses to shag five men to get a job, there are certainly people who condemn that, I just think she'll probably know best what she's doing. I suppose I wouldn't do it, but if she capitalizes on her good looks and the guy is such an idiot that he gives her the job because she is a good lay and not because of the qualifications required for the job then it's his own fault. The other way round it's more difficult, because we women are cooler. It's easier for a woman to utilize sex in that way and make fools of men. That's what I think, anyway. +

Aerobitch Discography

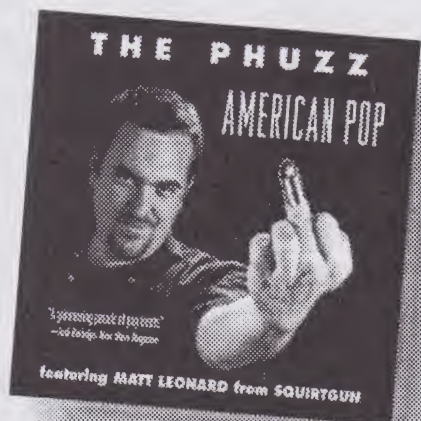
Lp's
C'mon Cop Make My Day (Cd Rumble 1996 / 10" Punch 1999)
Time To Start Kickin' Ass (Punch 1998)

MLP's
Aerobitch/ Puetazo "13 Steps To Hell" Split 10" (No Tomorrow 1998)
Aerobitch "An Urge To Play Loud" (People Like U 2000)

7"s
Aerobitch / Frogger Split 7" "Revenge Of The Nerds" (Punch/Subterfuge) (1995)
Aerobitch / Fast Food Split "No Beer Left" Split 7" (Punch 1996)
Aerobitch / Loudmouths "Shock And Acceleration" Split 7" (Punch 1998)
Aerobitch / Dialtones Split 7" (1999 Beluga)
Aerobitch "Are You Ready?" (1999 Intensive Scare)

Compilations
"Lights Out"/"Stupid Jerk" on "Regreso A Samoa, Homenaje Angry Samoans 7" (Punch 1996)
"J.F Girl on iFreak Town" Lp/Cd (Subterfuge 1996)
"My Little Drummer" on "El Ataque De La Gente N.O.T." Cd (N.O.T 1996)
"I Drink It All" on "Loose Drive" CD (RPM 1997)
"Puedes Sentirlo" on "Banquete Para Ellos, Tributo A Burning" Cd (No Tomorrow 1997)
"Your Radio" y "Not Guilty" on "They're Playing Punk Rock" Cd (Wild Punk 1997)
"How Many Times" on "Weird Waxed And Wired!" Dlp (Radio Blast/ Ox Fanzine 1998)
"I Drink It All" on "Get Up For Rock 'n' Roll" Cd (Bad Elvis/The Thing 1998)
"You" on "No Tomorrow 1993-1998" Cd (No Tomorrow 1998)
"Holy Smoke" on "Transilvania 666, Tributo A Iron Maiden" Cd (Locomotive, 1999)
"Steamroller Blues" on "Short Music For Short People" Lp/Cd (Fat Wreck Chords 1999)
"No Quedan Grupos De Rock" on "Tren Con Destino Al Infierno, Tributo A Eskorbuto" Cd (Klub Eskorbuto, 2000)
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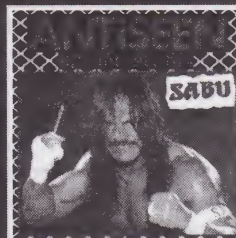
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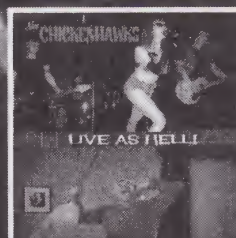
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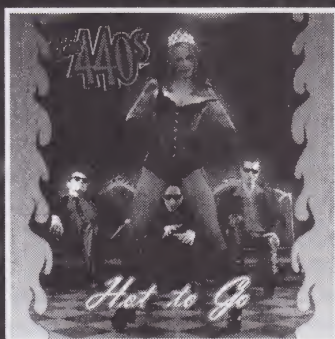
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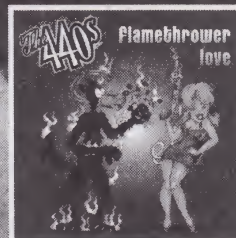
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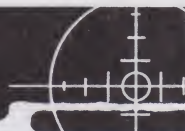
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YOU GIVE PROTEST A BAD NAME...

My wife and I tried as hard as we could to miss the Republican convention held here in Philly a few weeks ago. Along with our kid Elvis we spent 10 days driving back and forth to Florida. Unfortunately we fucking screwed up big time on the dates; we arrived back in town on the second day of the GOP extravaganza.

I don't know where we went wrong. Marla must've been using last years calender when she made our motel reservations..I dunno. We blew it plain and simply. We live about 2 miles as the crow flies from where the convention was officially held. It was a certainty that traffic was going to be fucked up for the duration of the event. I can't stand the thought of being stuck in traffic due to any reason whatsoever. I once was stuck for over four fucking hours in the

Thinkin' & Drinkin' w/ The Whiskey Rebel



middle of African American "Greek week" traffic; FOUR HOURS totally surrounded by Rap/Hip hop lifestyle types ogling and groping women while boom boxes and car stereos blared all around me.

We always flee Philly over the New Years holiday to escape the idiocy of the annual local "Mummer" parade.

I just can't fucking stand big crowds of people..don't bother to send me any complimentary stadium concert tickets unless accompanied by a backstage pass. When I take my poor kid to Phillies games I insist on going to games that will be poorly attended so that we can sit in remote bleacher seats a hundred or so feet from anybody.

Big gatherings fuck everything up here in Hostile City. The weekend of the Army/Navy game the bars are filled with military morons that make our locals seem like sage scholars. Little things that you take for granted are denied you when there's tens of thousands of extra people in the city; forget about calling a cab or ordering a goddamn pizza to be delivered.

We knew damn good and well of course that the convention would attract not only the Republican delegates and big shots and the news media. We received at least a half dozen unsolicited emails from groups

we had never heard of trying to recruit protesters for scheduled demonstrations that would be held to try to wrench attention away from the convention activities.

I was a child growing up during the turbulent 60's. No, I wasn't a goddamn hippie..I was too fucking young for that. By the time I was 16 the hippie era had been dead for a few years and I got into Gene Vincent and Link Wray instead.

I knew what was going on though. It was impossible to watch TV and not see all the coverage of protests ranging from violent ghetto rampages to harmless teenagers sitting in a circle chanting. We were shown films at school about the civil rights protests in the South. I had a lot of personal problems growing up. Even though I could sympathize with many causes that attracted protesters, I never felt compelled to get involved.

My "personal" problems have persisted to this day. I've never learned how to get along with co-workers or neighbors. To me the nun's at the fucking Catholic school around the corner are 10 times over as "evil" as any politician from either of the two political parties that "matter". Until the last sadistic P.E. coach is driven from the last public school..until the liquor stores are privatized and allowed to stay open 24 hours a day..until the unfair sin taxes are rolled back that are breaking the backs of us alcoholics..well, don't plan on me making it down to YOUR next cause oriented protest. I have my OWN axe to grind.

How many of you are ready to come to Philly to help me picket a liquor store or a church? Yep..I didn't think you'd want to. I realize that I'm fighting a very lonely battle. Believe it or not, part of the reason why I invented the "Whiskey Rebel" persona many years again the first place was partially to draw attention to my own "causes".

Seriously..how can I worry about spotted owls or how much some poor bastard in China is being paid to work on a sneaker assembly line when I have daily problems to deal with such as: my kid being "counseled" as a potential Columbine type threat because he wrote a paper entitled "why this isn't a free country?" (a true story). That was last school year. This year the public schools have initiated what is being reported as the most conservative public school uniform program in American history.

I'm gonna level with you readers right now.

I've written in this very column that I question the sincerity of mega-superstars that preach for a "cause"; I'll grant you that there are probably a few that are sincere but most see it as a good career move to soak up the limelight.

Like ANTISEEN sang: "it looks good for them to care".

Well, like it or not rockstars are sure as hell not the only ones whose intentions I question when it comes to "causes".

I'm just as suspicious of ordinary people whose lives become wrapped up in a political or social "cause" the same way I'm suspicious of priests, nuns, scout leaders and moonies.

NOW WAIT A FUCKING MINUTE!

I'm NOT saying that there are NO committed "cause oriented" people out there. My high school "modern problems" teacher Mr. Lacey served breakfast almost every morning to winos and derelicts for years. Instead of spending his holidays bogged down with the usual extended family

I'm just as suspicious of ordinary people whose lives become wrapped up in a political or social "cause" the same way I'm suspicious of priests, nuns, scout leaders and moonies.

oriented rituals that old son of a bitch would hang out all day at a mission. I hated "Spacey-Lacey" for the most part..but I'll give him total credit for being one committed dude. I read the other day that the late actor Dan Blocker ("Hoss Cartwright" from BONANZA) sponsored the college educations of several kids from poor families..and, he did it ANONYMOUSLY! It wasn't a "career" move for him.

When I see a couple dozen trendy looking kids protest with signs for 20 or 30 minutes in front of McDonalds over on South Street I'm not really impressed. Come on now..how many of 'em primarily see it as an opportunity to get laid?? How many of 'em are going to be working at some square job looking back on their naive youthful indiscretions within a few years?? For the answer to that one, simply look at their parents..the hippie generation and what they're all up to now.

In American society average Joe's are pretty damn smart in one regard; they've got idealistic, naive youths pegged basically correctly. For once they show wisdom when they chuckle at the "threat" of a bunch of kids with mohawk haircuts and piercings chanting about King George Bush being a murderer.

In a nutshell, that's how the RNC protests appeared to the ordinarily ignorant masses. "Just a buncha squirrely kids with a lot of time on their hands" was the final consensus.

If protest leaders had played their cards differently though, many locals might have wound up taking their side.

Average Philly neighborhood types are damn scofflaws themselves. They totally defy traffic and parking laws. They ignore jury duty summons in droves..just like they ignore vehicle registration and insurance laws. People openly drink in the streets and parks and stadiums here..laws be damned. If they want to throw a party on their street..they fucking park a couple cars blocking the ends of it. Fuck permits. At least a dozen cars on my block have illegally obtained handicapped parking permits.

Philadelphia residents are quite amused by civil disobedience overall.

So, what's the first thing the protesters trash? The ONE SYMBOL guaranteed to piss off and alienate the locals..the statue of Frank Rizzo! So, right off the bat the protesters look like cowardly fucking vandals.

Next move on the part of the organized protesters was to push dumpsters into the street in the center city area in an attempt to block rush hour traffic.

OH GREAT! What a splendid way to endear people to your cause. Punish EVERYBODY in a car whether or not they're on their way home from working for an evil corporation or going home after receiving cancer treatment. How many single Moms who needed to get their kids out of daycare were caught up in the protest?

Even though I understand and in some cases agreed with the causes the protesters were officially espousing..once you block MY CAR..FUCK YOUR CAUSE!! They can let you rot in jail for all I care since you OBVIOUSLY DON'T GIVE A RAT'S ASS ABOUT MY RIGHTS!

I read a passage in a local paper that pertains to this. A protest leader was asked why in the hell they thought they'd gain support by blocking traffic; he responded "we hope that people will see us and wonder why we're so committed". Oh COME ON! The first thing the citizenry see's is that virtually everyone in the protest is really young and they're all dressed in extreme fashions. They don't perceive this as

"commitment"..they perceive it as youthful naivete.

C'mon Mr. protest leader..if you want to impress the masses with your groups commitment make it look like something other than a bunch of punkrock/hippie kids bussed in from California or New York as a summer project.

(And why why WHY were there so few black, Hispanic and other minority faces seen in the ranks of the protesters?)

Being a big talk radio freak I just couldn't wait to hear what sort of coverage the protesters were receiving. A local guy named Dom Giordano was able to schedule as his first guest of the day a telephone interview with a spokesperson for the group coordinating the professional protesters (I believe the groups name was "R2K") I'm not prone to agreeing with Giordano's opinions. He's a staunch Catholic...and I wipe my ass with bible pages as most of you regular readers know. I listen to his show regularly though..because I don't mind listening to radio hosts that I disagree with at all.

He started out very fairly with the spokesperson. He asked her to please outline what the protesters were protesting. He didn't mean this in a sarcastic sense..he said that a lot of locals were puzzled about what they were specifically after. She said that they were against corporate greed.

"Ok"..I thought..that's a good start. I'm with them..

Then she declared that they were against what the two party system in America HAD BECOME.

"HELL YEAH"! I thought..good for them.

Next, she said that their immediate cause was to free from jail their Brother and

Sister protesters that had been arrested (about 200 or so by that point).

Alright....makes sense to me I nodded.

Giordano asked about the bus that had been seized loaded with live and dead animals and insects ranging from fruit flies to skunks, snakes, rats, etc. He asked how that fit into their cause..

Here's where the protest spokeswoman began to fuck up. She said "oh we hear that bus was scheduled to make a delivery at a pet shop."

I groaned.."oh SHIT!"

NOBODY would believe a story like that. What a stupid fucking answer..delivering DEAD FRUIT FLIES to a pet store. If they HAD a fucking excuse for toting a death wagon full of critters around, why didn't they use it? Or at least promise an explanation at a later time?

Christ..I don't want nuts driving around the city I have to live in distributing fucking vermin and pests. FUCK those assholes for that too.

You know what? I wouldn't put it past those fuckers to claim that the bus load of pests was planted on them by cops. That seems to be a standard tactic..when in doubt..when you're caught without a real answer..simply blame it on a police conspiracy.

The host asked the question that was on the lips of most locals I talked to during and after the RNC. Did the protesters actually expect to gain support by snarling people up in traffic jams?

The spokeswoman gave a corny answer here that smacks of cliché TV movie script writing. She invoked the name of "the people". She declared that "the people" will no longer accept business as usual in Philadelphia.

NOW WAIT A FUCKING MINUTE; aren't the poor assholes stuck in

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whether or not they're on their
way home from working for an
evil corporation or going home
after receiving cancer treatment.***

HIT SQUAD

traffic "the people" too? The protest group represent only a tiny fragment of "the people". "The people" if anything support the lame two party system in overwhelming numbers.

BY WHAT RIGHT does her group feel it deserves to speak for the rest of us? I'm deadset against neckties..but I KNOW I'm outnumbered on the issue. If the majority of my fellow humans want to wear neckties..then neckties they'll have.

Giordano asked if he could attend as a representative of the press the groups press conference that night at their headquarters..

The spokeswoman TOTALLY discredited herself here; she said "if you come down here you must agree to not interfere with our rights to speak without being interrupted.."

WHAT A FUCKING HYPOCRITE!

Was she being serious? Did she slip and forget for the moment that her group had been militantly, blatantly IGNORING the rights of others?

Or was she trying to convey an over-the-top arrogance as some sort of strategy? If that was the case, what kind of piss-poor strategy is it to turn off people that could potentially be led to understanding your cause?

The host busted out laughing at this point; he knew damn well that the girl had made a monkey out of herself. He didn't even have to argue with her..he gave her the chance to state her case and she totally fucking blew it!

All the cat and mouse game playing with the Philadelphia police force made the protesters look bad too; It was obvious that the organized protesters were doing everything in their power to goad the cops into reacting violently so that they could cry to the media about what bullies they were. This totally backfired on them. The cops never cracked..at least not on camera. There was lots of footage though of protesters stomping on the roofs of cars and tossing newspaper boxes around.

The protest leaders seemed to have such an obsession with the cops that any message seemed to take a back seat. Oh sure..the TV cameras got plenty of shots of kids with trendy "shocking" hairdo's and nose rings being dragged into police buses..and I saw several signs claiming that Bush is a "murderer"..but there was no effective expression of ideas.

You know what? I have FAR MORE respect for good ol' honest bottle throwers, looters and rioters that don't try to cloak themselves in do-gooder phony hype; Go out and fucking SMASH IT UP! if you're so inclined. And when a reporter sticks a microphone in your bloody face as they drag you away..SCARE THE SHIT outta the folks watching on TV by promising that THEIR town will be next. If you're leading a peaceful protest..well then by god be squeaky fucking clean martyrs..and you'll inspire people at home watching your protest on the boob tube.

My point is, if you expect to effectively win people over to your cause via the media don't preach peace and then start destroying property...you'll only wind up discrediting your cause. You need to EARN THE RESPECT of the masses in order to change society. So, If you're running amok in the streets destroying shit..don't claim to be a sanctimonious idealist.

Ok. I was gonna wrap this goddamn column up right about here..but my fucking server is STILL fucked up after about 12 hours of being down. It's about 4:00 am here in Hostile City..and I have to drive Elvis to his "creative and performing arts" high school in a few hours. I'm mildly drunk..and VERY pissed that I can't send this off. So, I guess I'll keep going for awhile.

After reviewing what I've written already I have a few comments to make. First off, I'm sorry to have to waste so much good space on politics. I realize sitting here working on about my 15th or so can of

Busch that I've maybe been a bit too fucking polite up until now.

Even though I've worked hard up until now to present the organized protesters with a bit of what I think is fair handed criticism....no matter how thoughtful and constructive I am, I know damn good and well I'm only going to receive abuse from the handful of them that might stumble across this in HIT LIST.

They don't want to hear what I have to say..because I disagree with the "truth" that their leaders have been indoctrinating them with. We're talking about atrained crew of zealots here. It's fucking IMPOSSIBLE to reason logically with zealots. This particular bunch of zealots are as stubborn and narrow minded as any Christian youth group if not more so. They would be amongst the first to criticize the tactics of abortion clinic protesters..but they're every bit as pigheaded.

Everything I've written so far could be dismissed by one of the zealot's leaders for any one or more of the following reasons:

1) Thee Whiskey Rebel is just another of those old reactionary rightwing assholes that writes for HIT LIST. He's full of shit just like the rest..a RACIST!

2)The picture accompanying his column provides conclusive proof that thee Whiskey Rebel is white, male, bearded, fat and therefore racist

3) His ignorant fascistic column only proves that HE has been suckered by the media. He wasn't there to personally witness numerous police atrocities and crimes that our "sources" tell us were committed upon jailed protesters.

4)Who is this guy? His writing sucks. He's a racist asshole. At least Mykel Board was funny now and then.

5) He's obviously lying; I saw the pigs fucking beat the shit out of several people that resisted arrest..so he's fucking lying.

6) Racist..Fascist..sexist..fat asshole beard..racist..fascist..sexist..etc, etc.

I've been overly zealous about a few things in my life too for that matter. In fact, I'd say that most of the protesters will escape this phase of their life..riding around in buses from one protest to another..and become tolerable human beings no worst than lots of you reading this.

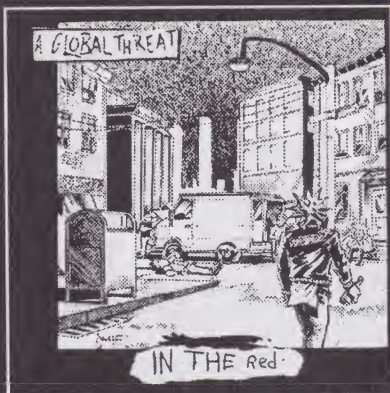
For Christs sake..the Cosmic Commander of Wrestling used to be a fucking *deadhead*! [ed. note: Hey...the first Grateful Dead album is brilliant!] Jeff Clayton used to be a straightedge skinhead (yep..bald head, "X's" and all). Professor Bale himself apparently wen't through some sort of over zealous left wing phase years ago. My buddy Mike Schuppe once gave his life savings to scientology. My wife Marla went to a Lutheran college for a year. And me? I went through a boisterous Beatle phase that must have bored the shit out of anyone within earshot.

To all you stubborn protest zealots out there preaching for your "causes"..one last word of advice (that you'll probably fucking ignore); when you wise up enough to realize that not ALL cops are vicious thugs, not ALL Republicans and Christians are rightwing-fascist-racists and one helluva lot of what protest leaders preach to you is pure manipulative garbage...you will be that much closer to the truth. Don't resist. You'll be happier when you leave most of that political dogma behind..it'll be a weight off your shoulders. If you want to make the world around you better, start with specific issues in your own backyard that you can have a real impact on. And for fucks sake, when you DO wise up don't do a 360 degree turn and start believing everything you read in the newspapers. Yes, the world is really fucked up in many ways; if you want to do something positive about it use your fucking head and think for yourself rather than allowing some manipulative protest leader to lead you around by the nose. ☺

THEE WHISKEY REBEL: email: whskyreb@inet.net

P.O.B. 31686 Phila,Pa. 19147

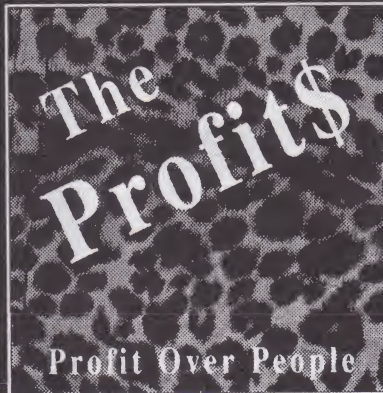
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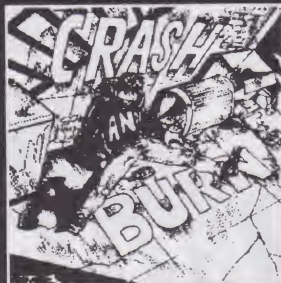
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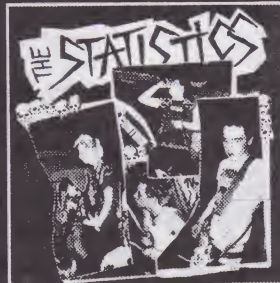
NEW BAND IN THE VEIN OF
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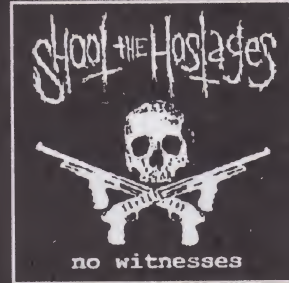
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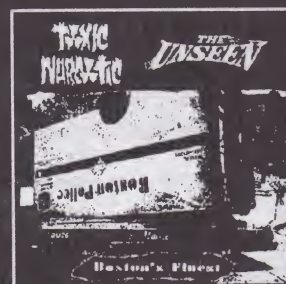
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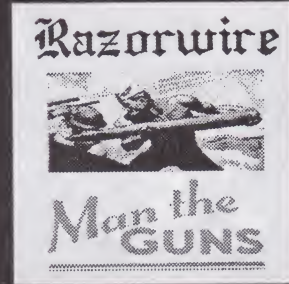
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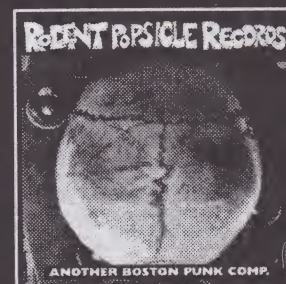
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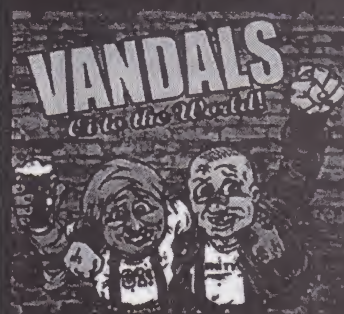
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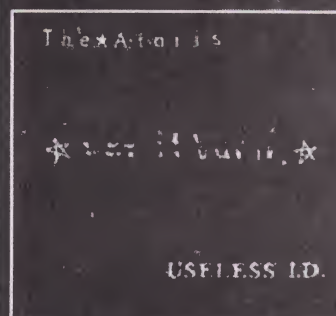
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THE PUNISHER'S WAR JOURNAL

AUGUST 2000 (AD)

Tuesday 8.1.00 • After my usual Tuesday crimefighting rituals of Taco Bell™, The Day Job and an evening swing by the nursing home to annoy my grandmother and receive my weekly fun-size Milky Way™ bar, i head out to the Queers/Lillingtons/Explosion show at the Concert Cafe. For the last few weeks, Cafe proprietor Time Bomb Tom has, for benefit of those with flash photography, been doing these "poses" before the headlining acts take the stage, based on some schtick perpetuated by WWF™ wrestlers Edge and Christian. Though i no longer have cable, plus am currently disdainful of today's pro wrestling owing to the unacceptable fact that real jocks actually like it now, therefore have not actually seen Edge & Christian's routine myself, my understanding of it, based solely on Tom's pre-headliner recreations of it, is that they come out before matches, and, for benefit of those with flash photography, do some manner of pre-match "pose" under the tongue-in-cheek auspices of doing the community in which they wrestle some manner of "honor," but, in fact, the poses actually cruelly mock some local sports tragedy, or some such shit. At my suggestion, for the benefit of flash photography, and in honor of the New England-based (well, sort of) Queers and the Boston-based Explosion, Tom and i reenact the joyous day the owner of the Boston Red Sox sold the contract of one George Herman ("Babe") Ruth to the New York Yankees for money to bankroll the production of the musical "No No Nanette." No one is amused. I guess i'm not that amused either, since, now that i think about it, i like "No No Nanette" a lot better than i like the New York Yankees (come to think of it, when Boris played in Peoria, nobody thought my references to "Pauline from Peoria," the maid in "No No Nanette," were very funny either, so i guess maybe "No No Nanette" is one of the few remaining sacred cows in 21st Century America). Later, i am asked on stage to sing guest vocals on "Louie Louie" and "This Place Sucks," which is also ironic in that i used to think that "Louie Louie"

was the ultimate Song Everybody Knows Yet Nobody Really Knows The Words To, but now i think it's "This Place Sucks." Also this evening, Cody of the Lillingtons gives me a t-shirt, size M, which fits perfectly, indicating that today's "medium" is the size that "large" used to be, which suggests that, relative to contemporary society, I'M SHRIIIIIIIINNNNNKING!!! I'M SHRIIIIIIIINNNNNKING!!!

Wednesday 8.2.00 • Today i am old enough to be president.. On the bright side, i am still not old enough to have AT&T as my long distance provider, so i guess i have much to be thankful for. After work, i am feeling most mischievous, so i poke a little of my girlfriend's schmot and walk downtown (she has been in Paris since January, storing many of her possessions, both licit and illicit, in my

spare room), where i purchase long-playing records by the Reds, Reatards and the Jellybean's Jumpin' Jukebox compilation, as well as rather amusingly ill-advised bargain paperbacks on Winning Gambling Systems and a copy of the *Necronomicon*. Sorry. I couldn't help myself. It is just *too damn funny* to be stoned in the mall in Green Bay, Wisconsin on your 35th birthday and see a copy of the *Necronomicon* at WaldenBooks and not buy it. After i return home, i sloppily attempt the conjuration "The Binding Of Evil Sorcerers," but seem to have some problems enunciating the line "qi-ishrusha pu-uttu-ru ipshetusha xulluqu." I attempt to e-mail a letter of comment to the Marvel Comics Group regarding Thor #28, but it is soon returned to me by the dreaded "MAILER-DAEMON," and i cannot pronounce the Necronomical Conjunction that will thwart the evil doings of that particular entity.

Thursday 8.3.00 • At practice, i attempt to lead the band into an impromptu rendition of "Prime Mover" by Zodiac Mindwarp & The Love Reaction. When i further

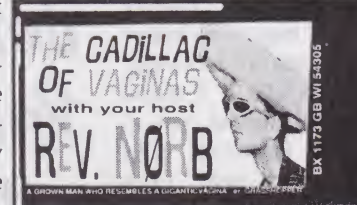
attempt to medley said tune into "Vicious" by Lou Reed, the band unplug their instruments and begin to head for the stairs, leaving me to stand there and warble solo. The funny thing is that if you medley it into "Livin' After Midnight" by Judas Priest, people will sit there and jam those same stupid three chords for hours.

Friday 8.4.00 • With The Girlfriend in Par-ee for the last seven months, i.e., with me having no one to impress, there has been little, if any, impetus for me to keep the house clean. Since she will be returning to American soil on Thursday, i

attempt to use Friday night to straighten out six months of clutter and filth. The tragedy of my indolence is shortly made apparent: Composed of equal parts filth and clutter, i find a five-dollars-off coupon from my mailorder pornography outlet of choice buried in a pile of crap on the kitchen table — a

coupon which i could have used on my order earlier in the week. The moral of the story is, of course, KEEP IT CLEAN. Wait, that's not a moral, that's a Vibrators song. Well, they sell vibrators there, too, never mind.

Saturday 8.5.00 • My Friday night cleaning efforts somewhat diluted by a Packers-Jets preseason football game which sort of spontaneously erupted whilst i was digging for Valuable Pornography Coupons, Saturday finds me continuing along the Good Housekeeping path unabated. I decide that the rubber mat in my shower is simply too fucking gross to bother cleaning, so i throw it out, followed, in short order, by my shower curtain and shower curtain liner. I then spend the entire afternoon driving from K-Mart™ to Wal-Mart™ to ShopKo™ to Penney's™ and back again, trying to



i am feeling most mischievous, so i poke a little of my girlfriend's schmot and walk downtown

find some combination of rubber tub mat, shower curtain, shower curtain liner and plastic shower curtain rings that meet my vigorous aesthetic specifications. I settle for a pink rubber tub mat, a powder blue shower curtain liner which i hang with black plastic curtain rings, and a black fabric shower curtain which i hang with blue plastic shower rings (note the pretentious "Spy vs. Spy" optical drama i create by hanging the curtain and the liner with the opposite-colored curtain rings!), none of which, of course, i found at the same place. I later decide that the powder blue of the shower liner and the blue of the curtain rings do not exactly match, and begin to understand why i am not president.

Sunday 8.6.00 • I frame and hang my original copy of the "Green Lantern's Mail Chute" letters page from *Green Lantern* #84 (June/July 1971) and declare my house to be "clean." Still troubling is the fact that whenever i turn on the vacuum cleaner, it distributes a stench not unlike smoked ham throughout the house. I come to the conclusion that i have merely vacuumed up a dead pig over the weekend, and make a note to get some vacuum cleaner bags.

Monday 8.7.00 • As always, Monday i fight crime by working essentially all day and all night. That evening, Pete Donnelly of the Figgs calls me at work and asks if i want to come hang out with them, as they are in town a day early. I inform him that my work schedule precludes me from accepting his kindly offer, but make a note to mention his invitation in print because name-dropping makes you cool.

Tuesday 8.8.00 • This Tuesday began as all other Tuesdays do — by fighting crime over a Cheesy Gordita Crunch Combo Meal™ at Taco Bell™ — and then took a fast turn into the frothy waters of high sartorial absurdity immediately thereafter. Finishing my Cheesy Gordita Crunch Combo Meal™ at Taco Bell™ #5044 on West Mason Street (now, i know what you're thinking: *Reverend Nørb, did you not once publicly state that you dined exclusively at Taco Bell™ #2676 in the Port Plaza Mall in Green Bay, Wisconsin, and would not eat again at Taco Bell™ #5044 on West Mason Street even if all the other restaurants in the world exclusively served vegetarian cuisine?* Why, yes, Bobby. Yes i did. Reverend Nørb was forced to rescind this proclamation, however, as one fateful early summer day, after just under a decade of loyal, four-or-five-times-a-week patronage, Rev. Nørb was informed by the manager of Taco Bell #2676 that, if Rev. Nørb chose to eat outside on the blue metal tables with the birdshit on them, Rev. Nørb had technically, like Elvis, "left the building," and, also like Elvis, was no longer eligible for Free Refills on his 44 oz. Diet Pepsi™. Rev. Nørb did not care for this new development in his dining habits one bit. Not only did this senseless stricture upset Rev. Nørb to the point where he began to uncontrollably refer to

himself in the third person, but it also touched his fighting spirit: Rev. Nørb decided that, after years of practically singlehandedly filling the Taco Bell™ #2676 war chest with all manner of valuable booty, this manner of shoddy treatment was completely unacceptable. Rev. Nørb decided to BOYCOTT the Taco Bell™ he once held so dear, and began to dine at the once-forbidden Taco Bell™ #5044 since the lady who pissed him off there hasn't worked there since like 1992. Needless to say, WITHIN ONE MONTH OF REV. NØRB'S BOYCOTT, TACO BELL #2676 WAS NO MORE. You don't tug on

Superman's cape. You don't spit into the wind. You don't pull the mask off the ol' Lone Ranger and you **DON'T FUCK WITH REV. NØRB'S FREE DIET PEPSI™ REFILLS!!!**), i walked up Military Avenue to the Army-Navy Surplus Store because i needed a Gilligan hat for this dopey "Gilligan's Island" cruise one of my co-workers instigated. Securing same, i double-detoured to Sears™, Where America Shops, in search of vacuum cleaner bags. Bags secured, as i passed through the ladies department on my way out of the store and back to my car which still sat in the Taco Bell #5044 parking lot, i stumbled across a clearance rack of ladies leopard-print stretch jeans. Well, one thing led to another, and, before ya know it, i'm walking back across the store with a size 7 pair of ladies' pants in my hands, so

i can try 'em on in the dressing room in the men's department. I inform the girl working in the men's department (she's Asian, but not hot) that i don't usually wear ladies' clothes (yeah, i suppose she gets that all the time), but am willing to learn, so i would like to try them on. The size 7's are too big, so i return to the dressing room, remove them, walk all the way across the store again to the ladies department, get a pair of size 5's, walk back across the store to the men's department, and try again. We decide that the size 5's fit me okay, although i'm not real happy about the flared legs and puny homo belt loops, so i buy my ladies' stretch jeans and go merrily on my way, although i think it's kind of a sign of a fucked-up world when a guy over six feet tall only rates a size M t-shirt and takes a size 5 in ladies' clothes. Needless to say, i wear my new cool pants to the Figgs show after work (fearing that i might be denied my fun size Milky Way™ bar, i hold off on changing into my new girlie duds until after visiting Grandma). The damn things don't have pockets, so i have to carry a purse. I keep my five-dollars-off pornography coupon in said purse, just to reaffirm my heterosexuality.

Wednesday 8.9.00 • The Figgs play a second night at the Concert Cafe. They invite me on stage to join them in a somewhat less-than-rousing rendition of "Paranoid," which turns out nowhere near as funny as the version of "Tint" i sang with them in Milwaukee earlier this year where i started singing the lyrics to "Psycho Killer" by the Talking Heads instead. I don't have to work the next day, so what the fuck do i care.

Thursday • 8.10.00 • My vacation starts with a middle-of-the-

night phone call from Europe. My girlfriend — heretofore referred to by the code name “Maggie” even though i’m sure she’d much rather have her name legally changed to “Nørb’s Girlfriend” — is stuck in Brussels. She was originally supposed to fly into O’Hare at 5 PM, then we were gonna meet there and fly out to Las Vegas for the Las Vegas Shakedown later that night. I had booked us the latest possible Chicago-to-Vegas flight that night — a 9:45 PM departure time — just in case her Paris-to-Chicago flight got delayed, but i guess in this day and age, allowing a mere four hours and forty-five goddamn minutes for airline fuckups is being overly optimistic. I am instructed to fly on to Vegas without her; she will hopefully meet me there Friday night. Great. I spend the first day of my vacation mowing the lawn and sitting at the Taco Bell (# unknown) on Velp Avenue (the one on West Mason still pretty much sucks) working on a Jumble™ puzzle from the *Chicago Tribune*, eventually deciding that “bewail” must really be a word and i am finished. I don’t leave for Chicago until 5 PM, meaning that i actually didn’t need to take vacation today.

To kill time, i take the old way (pre-interstate) to Milwaukee, which is uplifting in some pointlessly nostalgic cornball sense. Then i get to O’Hare and my 9:45 PM flight which i have been waiting around all day for is delayed another hour. Swell.

Friday • 8.11.00 • Arrive in Vegas sometime after midnight and make the mistake of taking a shuttle to the hotel. Shuttle buses are the Vegas equivalent of the Short School Bus; avoid them like the plague. My shuttle came equipped with some oafs from St. Louis who spent the entire trip making loudmouth “we are experienced and suave party animals, we own the place” type comments for far too long at far too high a volume until they actually were confronted by the pwetty lights of the Strip, at which point

in time they begin to excitedly jabber in little kid voices over whether or not there would actually be a casino *in* their hotel. Like, NO SHIT, SLICK. I check in at the Gold Coast, and, alone in the big city, i head downstairs for some late night/early morning roulette action. On my way to the tables, i see Russell Quan and Darin Raffielli (sp) engaged in dining activities, so i walk up to their table, yell “YOU ARE OFFICIALLY THE FIRST PEOPLE I’VE SEEN HERE THAT I KNOW!!!”, and walk back out again. I then attempt to put some of the Hi-Stakes Gambling Acumen i picked up from the \$1.99 bargain paperback i bought when i was stoned to work, engaging in a roulette betting pattern consisting of playing one chip which covers the entire “street” of numbers 1 thru 6, and individual chips on 8, 20, 22 and 26, and doubling certain bets after certain other bets pay off. The reason given for betting on those particular numbers is that *wherever the ball lands, it can never be more than two numbers away from one of your numbers*. This seems so absolutely senseless and without statistical merit to me that i figure it’s GOT to be true, so, spin after spin, i bet on 1-6, 8, 20, 22, and 26. Within an hour,

the Hi-Stakes Gambling Acumen i picked up from the \$1.99 bargain paperback i bought when i was stoned has landed me \$75 in the hole; i’m sure there’s some tawdry moral implicit in that, but all i know is that when i can pronounce “*Izizanimma ilani rabuti shima-a dababi*” without laughing, you’ll all pay, and pay dearly. On the bright side, i do get to gamble a while with a thoroughly stewed Andre Williams, and, during a bathroom break, i get to meet long-time pen-pal Pat Smick™ for the first time in the sixteen-or-seventeen-year history of our correspondence. A true American original, Pat kind of looks like *The Nutty Professor*-era Jerry Lewis crossed with Jamie from the Tantrums after biting into a lemon, and is much smaller than i always envisioned him to be. After a brief conversation with “new look” Shane White, we go to a party in the room of a bunch of Seattleites, where i am offered a “line” of toilet-tank

“speed” just because the host thinks it would be “cool” if he could say that he “hooked up Rev. Nørb.” I, of course, have no real desire to dump any more stimulants into my system, owing to the fact that the legendary oxygenation of Vegas lodgings seems to render grabbing anything more than a few cursory hours of sleep per night almost impossible anyway, but i am overcome with the innate ludicrousness of the situation, and decide that i need to have the guy “hook me up” simply because it would be funny to say that i got “hooked up” from some guy who wanted to “hook me up” because he thought it would be “cool” to say that he “hooked up” Rev. Nørb. I snort about a centimeter of the line.

Donning my ladies size 5 leopard print stretch jeans and my lime green, purple and hot pink leopard-print pimp hat, i enter the Gold Coast ballroom to begin three days of intensive Standing-In-Front-Of-Bands action.

WHOOO! I’M ALLLLLLL HOOKED UP!!! After this ceaseless debauchery, Pat and i go across the street to the Del Taco™ restaurant inside the Texaco Turtle Stop™, where i have two 49¢ tacos which absolutely kick ass on that goddamn Taco Bell™ bullshit. FUCK THE FOUR-PACKETS-OF-FIRE-SAUCE-TWO-PACKETS-OF-HOT-SAUCE PER TACO ROUTINE!!! ALL HAIL THE GLORIOUS NEW SIX PACKETS OF DEL-SCORCHO™ SAUCE PER TACO WORLD ORDER!!! I finally get to bed around 5 AM local time, which is like 7 AM my time. I wake up at 10 AM their time, and attempt to make inroads on my \$75 worth of red ink. Budget cuts force me from the 1-6, 8, 20, 22 and 26 model of Wealth Accumulation, where i lose five chips every turn, to a more reasonable two-chip loss stratagem where i just bet on 1-6 and 8. Amazingly, after about four hours of solid gambling, much of it spent alongside Chris from the Reds, i have recouped \$40 of my earlier losses. To celebrate, i buy myself a “Macho 44” 44 oz. Diet Coke from the Del Taco™. I rule supreme! The Texaco™ station with the Del Taco™ turns out to be the only place outside the hotel i go for my entire trip; they have a Del Taco™

HIT SQUAD

and sell cold 2-liter bottles of Diet Pepsi™ for \$1.39! Why go anywhere else??? Donning my ladies size 5 leopard print stretch jeans and my lime green, purple and hot pink leopard-print pimp hat, i enter the Gold Coast ballroom to begin three days of intensive Standing-In-Front-Of-Bands action by viewing the Demonics. They now all wear devil horns, like how kids used to dress up at pep rallies for my high school football team, the Green Bay East Red Devils. They also now feature the artist formerly known as “Nick from the Rehabs,” who is about as “demonic” as a Hardy Boys paperback these days. Whatever. I exit Ballroom and enter Showroom, where i view The Pinkz, who rule. Four girls playing punkish power-pop with a horizontally-striped shirt or two thrown into the mix for added period cred. Whoops, i said “period” and “girls” in the same sentence, my apologies. I return upstairs for the Street Walkin’ Cheetahs, who are rockin’, though fatally unimaginative, like many of their geographical contemporaries. I return downstairs for the Cheater Slicks. Fuck do they suck. I go back upstairs for Wayne Kramer, but do not testify. I then go sit outside and wait for Codename: Maggie to arrive. I sit outside in heat...no, wait, that’s not right, i meant i sit outside in the Vegas heat for forty minutes; when i return, i am told that she’s already arrived and is looking for me. Of course. We eventually find each other. *She looks like a god-damn supermodel!!!* (Editor’s note: After seven months in different hemispheres, this segment of the column is predictably mushy. Fast forwarding a bit, we find ourselves back upstairs). We see a few minutes of the Monkeywrench. They suck. We go back downstairs and watch the Stitches. They suck. Outside the Show Room, i ask Shane White to please explain the appeal of the Stitches to me. He is as clueless as i. If someone can s-l-o-w-l-y spell out for me how having virtually every song you play sound like the two or three slowest, most boring songs off *Never Mind The Bollocks* makes you rock, i’d really like to hear it. We go back upstairs for the Fuzztones. They suck, but i expected no less, and they had the common courtesy to play “1-2-5” first so i could leave right away, so bless ‘em for that at least. We go downstairs to see the Vice Principals, featuring Messrs. Scott “Deluxe” Drake and Billy Burks from the Humpers. They sound vaguely like a poppier, dare i say Rezillo-esque version of the Humpers (though this seemingly inane comparison may be solely due to their choice of covers: The Vice Principals do the Dave Clark Five’s “Glad All Over,” as did the Rezillos; they also cover “Jack The Ripper,” covered years ago by the Revillos. I demand the band come out of the closet regarding their secret Rezillo-worshipping pasts! I wanna see Scott Drake in a silver mylar space suit, and Billy in a miniskirt and a red bouffant hairdo!!!). They rule, although they are only the second band known to man that has a name which begins with the letter “V” and ends with an “S” and has three “i”s in the middle, the Vindictives being the first. We then miss both the Screws and Nashville Pussy, although we are not completely devoid of “Screw” and “Pussy” at this time. We emerge, wobbly, in time to catch some of Holly GoLightly, which didn’t really register much with me, followed by the Onyas, where we got to see a man’s naked ass on stage. *Don’t look, Ethel!*

Saturday 8.12.00 • I awake from a dream where i am trying to figure out which Greg Kihn records i should sell and which i should keep. After more Del Taco™, plus fruitlessly asking every old person i know what the second line of Greg Kihn’s song “Valerie” is, we enter the Show Room bright and early at 3 PM to watch the Wongs. We try to figure out how old the singer is. I say he’s 20, because that’s how old i was when i was most compelled to sing with a beer in my hand, and make a big point to convey to the audience how drunk i was. Now, i point out, i am much more mature, and only

find myself compelled to walk around with a 2-liter bottle of Diet Pepsi™ in my hand, and make a big point to convey to the audience how wired i am. As their set progresses, our estimates for the singer’s age keeps dropping, til finally we decide he’s about 15. After some poolside hijinx (Maggie wasn’t sure if she could tan topless or not; i attempted to force the issue, with predictably comedic results. No one was arrested), we see part of the Leaving Trains, who are amusing, and better than their records, if nothing else, the Valentine Killers, who are good, part of the infamous three-piece Bantam Rooster lineup’s set, which is good, the Dragons, who are good (goddammit, there’s just something inherently cool about a Mexican playing a Flying V...i dunno exactly what it is, but i’m certain it’s far less esoteric than the mystery of why people think the Stitches don’t suck), and the New Bomb Turks, who KICK EVERYBODY’S FUCKIN’ ASS. After their set, Maggie & i await the elevator with a crowd of other no-goodniks, when who but a sweaty, shirtless Eric Davidson walks into the elevator lobby to the receipt of what would probably qualify as a standing ovation were we all not so obviously standing. After Maggie and i do The Thing That Rhymes With Buck, i slither down to the Show Room to, in fact, catch Buck, who also do a thing that rhymes with buck, except that that thing is actually “suck.” I was a semi-fan of the quirky, vaguely punky she-pop of cub, but Buck seems like some ill-advised attempt to, i dunno, ROCK or something — a calling for which they are sadly unequipped. I buy a \$1 button that says “RUBBER LOVER” from one of the vendors selling the large selection of ridiculously overpriced thrift-store clothes in the Show Room. They charge me tax. It comes to \$1.07. This is gayer than my ladies size 5 stretch jeans. We regroup for some of the Flesh Eaters. **THEY ARE LOUD AND BALDING.** They play “Pony Dress,” which i consider a moral victory of sorts. We leave the Show Room and go upstairs to catch the Donnass. They play at their usual rock plod tempo. Fistfights ensue over whether Donna R. was hotter before she grew her hair out Cousin It fashion. We stay for the Raunch Hands, whom i actually used to play on my college radio show in the eighties before the men with the guns and the walkie-talkies made me get the fuck out of the transmitter room. During their set, Greg Lowery informs me that they are even more boring than my band. It’s good to be appreciated. At 3 AM local time — 5 AM my time — we head downstairs for the Reds. Unfortunately, no soundman has decided to join us, so we wait, and wait, and wait. The Reds finally launch into an incredible set, infusing frantic punk bombast with that sort of misplaced arty edginess long exhibited for no known reason by Texas bands. Their choice of cover material — “Dead End America” by the Pagans and “Ack Ack Ack Ack” by the Urinals — is a pretty effective summation of their...their...their fuckin’ *oeuvre* or whatever you fuckin’ call it. I will not go so far as to say that the Reds are the best band ever from Texas, but i will say that they are the best band ever from Texas *that i can think of right now*. None can ask fairer than that!

Sunday 8.13.00 • The Las Vegas = No Bedtime equation catches up with us; we do not wake up until 3 PM local time (5 PM my time). Following more Del Taco™ action, we hit the Ballroom @ 5 PM for the Zodiac Killers. I’ll say this for Greg’s new band: They certainly seem to have their shit together on stage more than any other Greg Lowery project i’ve ever seen live. On the minus side, i still think that much of their material is so-so; this probably stems from the fact that in all Greg’s other bands, he was surrounded with others who might conceivably be considered to have been touched by the scurvy, cretinous hand of, Genius: In Supercharger, he had Darrin Ravioli (sp?) (i refuse to learn how to spell his name correctly! Deal with it!), my likely pick for “Songwriter of the 90’s” should anyone ever request my opinion; in the Rip Offs, Jon Von, *bon vivant* at large; in the Infections, Shane White was at his gear-slingin’ peak. In the Zodiac Killers, the only punk rock Genius,

as far as i can tell, is Greg, and, in playing this real fast shit, he's sort of operating in an element that really isn't his prime stomping grounds anyway. Regardless, i thought they were pretty decent for a buncha old guys in 7 Seconds armbands. For the last two songs, Greg just sang while the band schlepped on behind him, which was, for some unknown reason, totally bitchin'. Too bad about him getting burned on the traditional t-shirt toss, though. Next up: The Von Zippers, who did not play "Truck Stop Nun," but ruled regardless, followed by the Bobbyteens, who led off with "Hey Roxy" and managed to cover "Young and Dumb" by the Rubber City Rebels somewhere along the way. If Tina never gets offered a part in a John Waters film and Russell never gets to be on the *Hollywood Squares*, then God is a merely a fuckhead who killed my pet parakeet, Sonny. Down to the Show Room for Loose Lips. Shane White's long, thinning, graying hair currently makes him look like some dead classical music dude; insert your own joke as you see fit. After viewing the band live, i kinda figured out why i like the album so much: They were obviously playing to click track and tuned all the backing vocals to the right key on some kind of wacky SoundTools contrivance, 'cause that sure the hell wasn't what was goin' on live. Their songs sorta started off at a plod, and proceeded to enplod even further as they dragged on, with the backing vocals bein' more hoarse gurgles than those sweet, gay "Sympathy For The Devil" styled hoots in evidence on the album. Their drummer, whom i once accused of having fat arms, lost a bunch of weight. Now he just drums like he has Muscular Dystrophy or something. After the set, Maggie informed me that Greg Lowery once told her that she could book the Infections only on the condition that she sleep with Wesley, and that, after further review, she would, in fact, have "totally done" Wesley. After about twenty minutes of total incredulity on my part, i jealously began to mock Wesley's awkward drumming style, at which point in time Maggie said words to the effect of "Wait, Wesley was the DRUMMER??? I thought he was the GUITAR PLAYER!!!" Perhaps you had to have been there. The Real Kids serve to be the musical highlight of my trip, which is what i would have expected had i not heard so many cautionary fables about their current supposed lack of rock prowess beforehand. Beats me, i thought they were absolutely great. John Felice was even wearing a Descendents "Everything Sux" t-shirt, which is cool if only because i wrote the press release shit for that record and now I'M COOL, TOO! I once recall some story Joe Queer told me about some quintessential Memorable Rock Experience he once had where he was at a Ramones concert with John Felice on his left and Jonathan Richman on his right; i felt that i had achieved a similarly Memorable Rock Experience as i maniacally pogoed to the Real Kids with Darin Raffarooni on my left and...and...and some drunk guy on my right. Then Darin left, and i had Jason from the Weird Lovemakers on my left and some other drunk guy on my right. Then Maggie got there and i had her on my left, and a third drunk guy on my right, so, OKAY, NO, i didn't actually have a famous punk rock star on my left and on my right simultaneously, but, goddammit, CUMULATIVELY i think it still qualified. They encored with "Reggae Reggae," which is the exact perfect 100% right encore. Too bad about the Babe Ruth thing though. The Dictators more or less wrapped things up, and while i don't share the enthusiasm that other have over their new material (though "Who Will Save Rock & Roll" was cool enough, in its own Springsteen-esque manner, to make me briefly remove my earplugs — an honor generally only bestowed on Truly Great rock experiences), i still love 'em — but i dunno WHAT the FUCK they were thinkin' playing all those songs off the Manitoba's Wild Kingdom record. I mean, there IS a reason nobody fucking remembers it, ya know?

Monday 8.14.00 • In the elevator, Andre Williams tells me that my powder blue Superman™ t-shirt is "the bomb," and offers to

trade shirts with me. I decline. After breakfast at Del Taco™, we fly from Vegas to Phoenix to Chicago, then drive 200 miles home. Party on, Garth!

Tuesday 8.15.00 • Maggie bakes me a cheesecake. I eat half of it.
Wednesday 8.16.00 • I eat the other half of it.

Thursday 8.17.00 • Maggie bakes Erik #1 a cake for his birthday. He doesn't let me eat any of it. We go see some lame band called The Stereo. I tell Tom i'm not so sure i dig the punk rock/Night Ranger sound. He corrects me: "It's just the Night Ranger sound." I am wearing the blue wig Maggie wore at her high school graduation. Needless to say, on the street outside the Concert Cafe, i run into a bunch of non-punk-rock people i know. I tell them i take a ladies size 5, and we go on our way.

Friday 8.18.00 • After work, Boris + Maggie pile into the van and head towards Mutant Pop Fest in Warren, PA — a crazed assemblage of a dozen or so bands with some manner of tie to the Mutant Pop record label which is, of course, based out of Oregon. The plan is to stay in Indiana tonight, play Pennsylvania on Saturday, play Chicago on Sunday, and be back to work on Monday. I have refused to actually find out how far a drive it is from Green Bay to Warren, on accounta i figure if i actually know, i won't wanna make the trip.

Saturday 8.19.00 • I start the day with my first attempts at shaving a pussy. I am surprisingly bad at it. The owner of the pussy yells instructions like "push down harder! Shave with vigor!" but i just bumble my way through, hacking off a few strands at a time with my dull Gillette Sensor™ that i bought after Super Bowl XXI. When it gets to the tricky parts, i surrender the razor to the owner of the pussy, who just goes ZIP! ZIP! HACK! SCRUNCH! and is done in like twenty seconds. Hey, i might be unskilled, but at least nobody had done to their clitoris what fuck-up Japanese mobsters have done to their pinkies! After about fifteen years, we eventually make it to the gig. The drive turns out to be over 700 miles. Party on, Garth! The show is held in a gymnasium. The neighbors have complained about the noise, therefore all the windows must be kept closed during the show. Hey, you know you rock when you drive 700 miles to play a 45 minute set in an unventilated gymnasium! My rock wardrobe for the weekend consists of my green, purple, and hot pink leopard spot pimp hat, worn over a face mask created by cutting eye and mouth holes in a purple zebra stripe bandana (vintage mid-80's — truly the salad days of the wacky bandana!), worn over my prescription sunglasses with the one purple lens and the one chartreuse lens, nicely accenting my purple vinyl zip-up jacket, complementing my lime green leopard-spot cut-off stretch pants. NOTE THE INCREDIBLE AESTHETIC PLANNING THAT WENT INTO THIS WARDROBE!!! We play last, 'cause we're so pokey. Regardless, after our exceptionally dorky set, i change my duds back by where we have our merch set up, and find, after some inspection, that SOME MISERABLE BLACKGUARD has FILCHED my PIMP HAT!!! Cry HAT-NAPPER!!! Cry FIEND!!! (etc.) Needless to say, driving 700 miles to play in an unventilated gymnasium is one thing, but driving 700 miles to etc. etc. and then to have some unadulterated SWINE make off with one's trusty pimp hat is another kettle of fowl completely; needless to say, i am in a surly humor as we head back westward. The original plan called for us to stay in Warren overnight; once we realized how long a drive it was, however, we brilliantly decided that we needed to drive at least part way back that night. Unfortunately, we had not taken into account the eventuality that there would be some NASCAR bullshit going on in the area, and that EVERY DAMN HOTEL ROOM IN OHIO would be BOOKED SOLID. Through the night a grumpy, hatless Reverend drove; stopping fruitlessly at every roadside motel and hotel, search-

ing for succor, or at least a NEW GODDAMN HAT, and finding none. Through Ohio and Indiana did said Reverend hatlessly and fruitlessly drive, until, some time around 7 AM, somewhere in Michigan, WHICH ISN'T EVEN ON THE GODDAMN WAY, said Reverend talked the addleheaded proprietor of a Knight's Inn to let the weary crew bunk down in a pair of rooms that had just been vacated by early-departing travelers. FUCK HOUSEKEEPING! WE'LL SLEEP IN OTHER PEOPLE'S SPOOGE AND GIRL GERMS!! Just GIVE US THEM DAMN ROOMS!!! I am so bushed (no shaving pun intended) when we finally get to our rooms that i can't seem to get my dick out of my boxers to pee (time constraints force the story of Why I Switched To Boxers to wait for another time. Rest assured that this tale is fearsome indeed!). I try, and i try, and i try, and i CAN'T FIND MY BARNDOR. This is when, with the aid of my lovely assistant, i realize that i've had my underwear on backwards since we left Indiana Saturday morning.

Sunday 8.20.00 • We wind up sleeping til like 2 in the afternoon, and burn rubber to Chicago, where we have a great show, even though not having my AWOL pimp hat totally FUCKED EVERYTHING UP and RUINED MY OUTFIT and CONTRIBUTED TO THE WORLD'S COLLECTIVE MISERY. Luckily, the soundman returned my similarly AWOL Batman™ mask that i left behind when we played in Arlington Heights, so i wore the Batman cowl over the purple zebra stripe mask over the (etc.), which is hardly the same effect as having the nicely coordinated pimp hat, but desperate times require desperate measures. I am interviewed for a Screeching Weasel documentary being put together

by Panic Button. Someday i hope to have enough nuttage to commission other people to put together documentaries on my own fucking band; until then i content myself with telling stories in documentaries about other people's bands about how the first time i went to a Screeching Weasel show they were opening for the Rhythm Pigs, so i sat in the bar and got drunk until the Rhythm Pigs came on, etc. I whip the crowd into a maddened frenzy when i inform them that i'm gonna find that Amish pimp bastard who stole my hat, knock him off his Clydesdale and scratch his Yahtzee™. In Racine, Ron offers to drive in my stead. I accept his kindly offer, take his seat in the back, and quickly find out that you can do all kinds of dastardly shit with your girlfriend in the back of the van when your drummer is driving. I also find out that the dastardly shit is a lot easier to pull off if you don't, for a world-record SECOND consecutive day in a row, put your underwear on backwards.

Monday 8.21.00 • All rested up, i work for about twelve hours or so, with my undies checked and double-checked for accurate alignment before i leave. When i come home, Maggie and i engage in a heated game of "20 Questions" involving what has come to be known as "The Book." As i understand it, somewhere in her room in her parents' Boston home there exists a notebook containing names, dates, and places of everyone she's ever had a sexual encounter with. Needless to say, i am morbidly fascinated with this book which i am told i will never see — not that i really need to

know names and dates and places and all that, i just kinda wanna wallow in the whole presumable ambient sordidity of it all. Our conversations regarding The Book lead to Maggie stating that there is ONE person in particular whom i will "just die" if i ever find out about, which, in turn, leads me to pester her relentlessly about the identity of this one random screw — someone whom she is "pretty sure" i've met, and whose band she's pretty sure i've seen, and whose band she's pretty sure my band has played with — whom i must NEVER, EVER find out about. We decide that the only fair solution is for one — and only one — game of 20 Questions to be played regarding the identity of the Mystery Lay™. If i cannot uncover the identity of the Mystery Lay following the 20 questions, i am sworn to never bring the subject up again. After 19 questions spanning almost three hours (note my intense thought processes and great desire to win at all costs), i correctly deduce the identity of Mystery Lay™. The funny thing is that i never met the guy in my life, let alone seen or played with his band, let alone would even know what he looks like without referencing a record cover — i only met the singer in his band once a couple years ago. Haw haw!

Tuesday 8.22.00 • I move Maggie into her dorm, some 75 miles away. One lone horny male on a floor full of sorority chicks, and i come away with absolutely no good stories. After work, i log on my computer, and, after receiving a few tips, find my pimp hat on eBay. The mysterious "Pleather Liberation Front"

The mysterious "Pleather Liberation Front" has [my pimp hat] up for auction with a minimum bid of \$599.

has it up for auction with a minimum bid of \$599. I notice that, in lieu of payment, the purchaser can alternately state that "as of (date, time), Dirt Bike Annie are the best live band in the world" in *Hit List* magazine. The hat napper is pictured modeling my hat on the eBay listing with a copy of Hunter S. Thompson's *The Rum Diaries* in front of his face, concealing his identity. It is, of course, Timbo from Mutant Pop Records. I e-mail Timbo and tell him that i'd comply

with his request regarding the lauding of the live prowess of Dirt Bike Annie, but publishing commentary that in any way involves Asian girls in leather pants violates one of the conditions of my parole. After i get off the net, i eat the entire chocolate-frosted yellow layer cake Maggie baked for me before she left for school.

Wednesday 8.23.00 • I don't feel so good. However, i do wooze down to the Dirt Bike Annie/Proms show, for obvious reasons. They really *are* a fine live act, they do little DEVO-esque synchro-hops, and little cover-band-in-white-shirts-and-matching-vests-who-used-to-cover-"Flirtin' With Disaster"-esque synchro-high-kicks, and all that various other heady shit. I wear Maggie's pink fuzzy cowboy hat, just to let them know that one pirated pimp hat doth not an empire make or break. They apologize profusely for the indignity of the Pimp Hat Swindle, and lay all blame squarely at the Shoe-Hutched feet of Timbo. The soundman has the new Go-Nuts CD. I borrow it, so i can look at the lyrics of the stupid song i wrote, because that makes me feel important. Of course, it would make me feel even more important if they'da actually *sent me a copy of the damn thing*, but who am i to be critical? As i scrutinize my lyrical contributions to America's premier Snak-Rock and Gorilla revue, i notice that Timebomb Tom and the artist formerly known as Depo-Pat — the two people in this world who were wack enough to elect me to serve as Best Man at their weddings — are in conference.

Suddenly, their *tete-a-tete* adjourns, and they both point at me accusingly. They inform me, in unison, of something i had always suspected: I am a LOUSY best man! "Because your marriages failed?" i ask. "BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T STOP US!" they retort.

Thursday 8.24.00 • After work & practice, i hit the Samiam show long enough to do my usual schtick of attempting to aggravate Sergie by standing in the back and yelling for Sweet Baby songs all night. Yep, there's two kinds of people y'meet at Samiam shows...them's who attempt to aggravate Sergie by standing in the back and yelling for Sweet Baby songs all night, and them's who...er...hmm...well, i *think* there's some other kind. I dunno. Maybe there isn't, now that i think about it. After that particular whap-a-dang breaks up, i head over to Muldoon's for the Bantam Rooster/Leg Hounds gig. The Leg Hounds manage to cover two of my top three Devil Dogs songs of all time, the #1 "Radiobeat" and the #3 "Baby I'm A King." Their shocking omission of #2 "Go On Girl" could be merely attributed to my getting there late because i was so absorbed in yelling Sweet Baby songs at Sergie down the street. Bantam Rooster play an excellent 35 minute set at minute. I decide that as of twelve-something AM CDT 8.25.00, Mike of Bantam Rooster is one of the top ten drummers of all time, though not in the top five, and inform him of same. He is much more impressed with that than Dick Ayers was when i informed him that he was my third favorite inker of all time earlier this year.

Friday 8.25.00 • Fifth? Sixth? pressing of "Saucer To Saturn" arrives on my doorstep in the morning. I had sent sent them new disc graphics, based on the faulty supposition that they had recourse to opaque inks, thusly could print yellow and cyan over black without a problem. I was informed that the inks they used to print on the CDs was, like printer's inks, transparent, ergo yellow and/or cyan could not be printed over black. I then informed them to take the black background and just make it white instead, so they'd be printing yellow and cyan over white. Simple, right? I open up one of the boxes of CDs on my doorstep. I have 1000 black compact discs with barely visible cyan and yellow printing over the black. Fucking DUH. After work, i drive down to Ripon and pick up Maggie for the weekend, forcing her to listen to my Jazz Butcher album until she falls asleep. Also, having given myself two weeks to figure it out by myself, i crack and pull out my "RockKihnRoll" album, finding that the second line of "Valerie" by the Greg Kihn Band is actually "*if you're not there then I just might park, and dream about your face, in the dark.*" Fuck-Kihn-A.

Saturday 8.26.00 • None of your goddamn business!

Sunday 8.27.00 • Maggie, Erik #1 and i attend the Brewers vs. Padres game at Milwaukee County Stadium. With the pitcher's spot due up for the Brewers in the sixth, Brewers mismanager Davy Lopes elects to pull starter John Snyder (note: not the guy from Vesicular Basalt) for a pinch hitter, even though Snyder is pitching a 1-0 shutout. Upon hearing the term "pinch hitter," Maggie's ears perk up and she says "oh, a pinch hitter! Just like me!" After some smirking, i inform her that the term i think she's grasping for is "*switch* hitter." Oddly enough, this very move is the Brewers' undoing, as set-up men David Weathers and Valerio De Los Santos botch everything up immediately, and the Padres go on to win by a score of something like 3-1.

Monday 8.28.00 • Time Bomb Tom invites me over to watch WWF wrestling, as the US Open has caused its starting time to be delayed til 10 PM central. Since i usually work from around 10 AM to 10 PM on Mondays, i figure this will be one of the few chances i get to actually watch wrestling on cable, so i walk over to his pad and plunk down on the floor, where i actually get to see the celebrated Edge and Christian mocking their adversaries for the benefit

of flash photography. Their schtick this week involves two pairs of midgets, dressed in the manner of some of their tag team rivals. If i were Vince McMahon, i wouldn't bother sticking my money in a hopeless cause like the XFL — i'd invest my idle zillions in pro-marijuana lobbyists. I mean, *who's NOT gonna wanna watch this when they're stoned?* If pot were legal, the WWF would likely rule the earth. I own 14 shares of WWF stock, so i got a vested interest in them ruling the earth, even though i only watch wrestling like once a year now. One guy who is actually pretty cool despite his current popularity is The Rock™. He has excellent diction. Hunter Hearst Helmsley™ sucks though, he's like a non-mute Dennis Condrey. During the last match, Tom falls asleep. As we all file out following The Rock™'s successful title defense against Cane™, or Kane™, or Cain™, or whatever™, he comes to and asks what he missed. I tell him he missed Mad Dog Vachon running out and beating some guy with his wooden leg, but some other guy there who i didn't know told me that actually happened once. Sheesh, i'm gettin' old.

Tuesday 8.29.00 • Me and my six-year-old pal Alex go see *Godzilla 2000*. Not to be confused with the lame grey & blue Matthew Broderick era *Godzilla*™, nor *Godzilla 1985* (featuring an overstuffed Raymond Burr and a so-prominently-placed-as-to-rival-the-screen-time-of-the-Monolith-in-2001: *A Space Odyssey* Dr. Pepper™ machine), *Godzilla 2000* is a "real" *Godzilla* movie — that is to say, filmed in Japan by the Toho™ Corporation and dubbed in English. *Godzilla* fights a mighty flying rock. Definitely one of the best *Godzilla* movies i've seen! Alex kept interjecting poignant commentary like "*OH NO! IT'S GODZILLA'S LEFT FOOT!*" and "*OH NO! GODZILLA'S LEFT FOOT JUST STEPPED ON SOMETHING!!!*" so it was a highly moving experience. On the way in, we saw Packer running back Dorsey Levens™ in the theater, but he was with a girl, so he probably wasn't going to see anything cool like *Godzilla 2000*. I told Alex to take great care not to bump into Mr. Levens, or he might put him on the disabled list for another six months.

Wednesday 8.30.00 • My pimp hat is returned via the US mail from the vile clutches of the Pleather Liberation Front, with a snide little note that reads "Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it" — obviously in reference to the Great Antler Helmet Heist of years back. Okay, Timbo, fair enough. Next time you come through Wisconsin with your truck and your dog and you want to sleep on my living room floor, i'll sit up all night on the living room sofa with the lights on and a hunting knife out so i can make sure that i don't irresponsibly allow any of my wacky headgear to fall into the wrong hands. *Keep your eyes on your fries, dude!*

Thursday 8.31.00 • Former Green Bay Packer linebacker Brian Noble is coming out of the Taco Bell™ on Velp Ave. as i am going in. Truly i lead a blessed life. I pick up my mail at the post office. It includes the latest issues of the fanzines *Hit List* and *Go Metric*. I am beside myself with glee! Finally, another issue of one of the king daddies of contemporary zinedom, brimming with intelligence, wit, humor, brilliance, insight, candor, vitriol! Oozing with life and fervor! Dripping with clever turns of phrase, with gay banter, with witty repartee! Truly, one of punkdom's last beacons of hope in an otherwise fog-shrouded tapio-ca of ennui! I flip frenziedly through its pages! I devour every salient morsel this publication has to offer! I read and re-read my own meager contributions, hoping against hope that they will measure up to the rest of the output contained in this veritable bastion of literary prowess — this virtual operator's manual of cool — this double-stapled shrine to All That Really Matters!!! And, after i finished reading *Go Metric*, i briefly flipped through *Hit List* too, but all i noticed was that the italics are missing from my column again and now half my apostrophes wound up being commas. Oh well, September's another month. †

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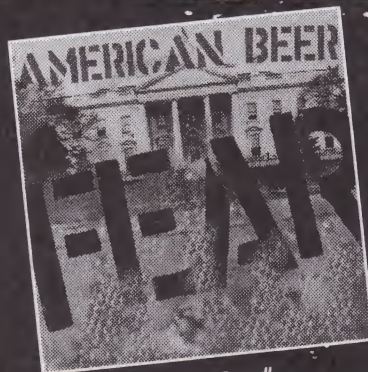
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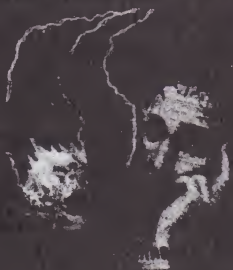


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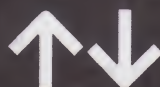
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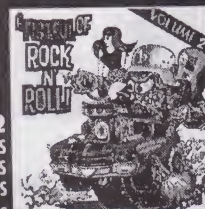
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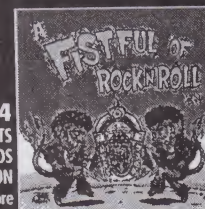
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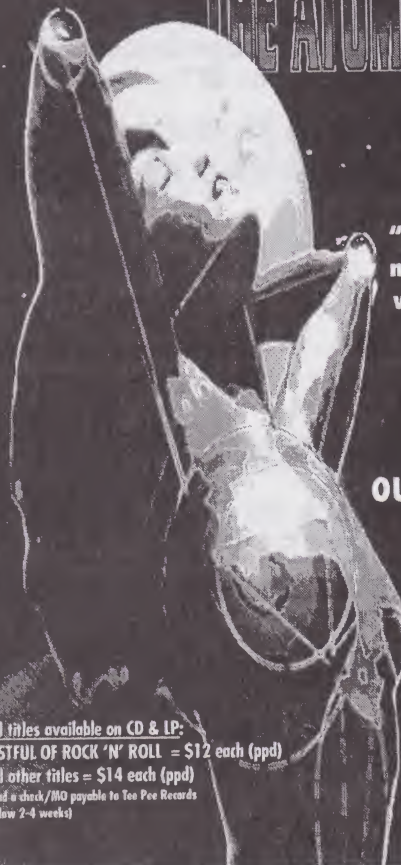
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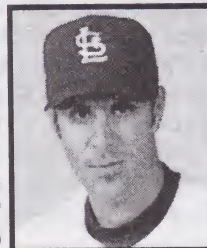
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Punks hate jocks, and jocks hate punks. It just sort of worked out that way. Occasionally you will find a punk that is into sports, but 90% of the time it's one of those "the OFFSPRING F@#!*'n F@#!*'n rule, bro" types of "punk". Hell, the occasional pro-sports punk might even know about "super underground" bands like NOFX. Then there is the story of Scott Radinsky. He lives two parallel lives, one as a baseball player, one as a singer in a band, and does both professionally. I recently had a chance to sit down and talk with Scott, as his band PULLEY came through town. While I must admit that the story of "the man of two different hats" was my main interest, once I got to meet Scott I realized that he was one of the most down-to-earth, nice guys I had ever met. And after watching PULLEY blow doors on just about any other live band I had seen in quite some time, I was hooked. This is the interview I conducted that night. There were a few questions that I didn't get around to asking, but when I heard his response to the what turned out to be the last question, I couldn't think of a better way to transmit a glimpse of the man I met that night to the rest of the world.

Brett Mathews

#36 Scott Radinsky, Pitcher

Bats: Left
Throws: Left
Debut: 4/9/90
Born: 3/3/68 in Glendale, California
College: None
Height: 6' 3"
Weight: 215



PULLEY's SCOTT RADINSKI

Interview by Brett Mathews

PULLEY

y their choice

PULLEY



Brett: Your career has always seemed pretty amazing, in the sense that it has involved both professional athletics and rock music. Which did you get involved in first? I know that the band SCARED STRAIGHT existed a while ago, and I know you that you were also in the minor leagues a while ago.

Scott: Well, punk rock definitely happened long before sports ever happened for me.

Brett: When did punk rock happen for you?

Scott: Punk rock happened for me in late '80 and '81. I don't know exactly how old I was, but I was in eighth or ninth grade, which was '80 or '81.

Brett: Where were you living then?

Scott: In Southern California, specifically Simi.

Brett: So you got involved during the heyday of Black Flag and the Adolescents and bands like that?

Scott: Yeah, Black Flag, the Adolescents, Wasted Youth, and the Circle Jerks. Los Angeles was thriving at that time with good shows almost every weekend. God.

Channel 3, the Angry Samoans. You name it, there were so many bands. It was really fun, especially not being old enough to really realize what was going on.

Brett (laughing): So that was the type of music that you were into. When did you start SCARED STRAIGHT?

Scott: I don't recall exactly when we started, but I know that I have a demo tape at home from late '81. It was probably in December, around Christmas vacation. We were out of school. We recorded on a four-track in our living room; at the time it was an A-track. Yeah, that's an ancient tape. (laughter) That's all I can remember. We must have gotten together a few months before that.

Brett: You first recorded for the Mystic label in '82 or '83?

Scott: I know we were on a hardcore compilation, which was the first thing we did with Mystic. I don't know exactly when that came out, but I know we recorded it about a year before it was actually released. And then we did a 7" and appeared on numerous other comps. We recorded several songs for comps which were supposed to come out in two months or so, but invariably they'd come out two years later. It was all done "Doug Moody

style". (laughter)

Brett: That pretty much sums it up. How long was SCARED STRAIGHT together?

Scott: We were in existence from around '81 to about '92. That's quite a while.

Brett: So the band carried you through high school and several years beyond that.

Scott: Through most of high school, that's for sure. The whole SoCal hardcore thing was going on, and in '83 and '84 it was really, really big. A good time was had by all. R.K.L. and Dr. Know were getting fairly popular then.

Brett: I assume that you pitched in high school.

Scott: Yeah, I started when I was a junior in high school, so I was seventeen when baseball really began on a serious note for me. I played here and there when I was a kid in the Little League, although I was never really an everyday type of baseball, baseball, baseball guy. I really wasn't in high school either, but I was on the team. Initially, I was more concerned with keeping up my grades. I was also having fun, and at a certain point I saw the light - I had the realization that "wow, maybe I

can get by without working for a while." I ended up taking that route. Everything happened really fast. I finished high school and immediately got drafted by the Chicago White Sox. I graduated on a Friday, and on Saturday I left. I went to go play baseball for a few months, then I came home.

Brett: Was that their farm team?

Scott: Yeah, I played on their farm team from '86 through '89. Every year I would come home. It was pretty much non-stop. It was baseball, come home, play music for five or six months, tour. Then I'd go back to baseball begin the entire cycle again.

Brett: I imagine that your baseball schedule was a lot less rigorous than it is today, since obviously you're now playing at a different level.

Scott: Yes and no. The travelling was way gnarlier back then. It's still pretty hardcore. It's definitely "be here, be there", but now at least it's on an airplane. Life is not that bad. (Laughter) It's cool now. I have less time to devote to the music, but that's the way it is. We are all older and more mature now, we can sit and write music on our own and then send tapes back and forth. It's more continuous now, musically speaking, then it was back then. Back then baseball would just shut down for half the year, whereas for the past five or six years it's been an ongoing process.

Brett: How did the other members of SCARED STRAIGHT feel about you going off to play baseball?

Scott: I don't think it was ever a problem that I was going away. One of our guitar players, Dennis, was going to school up here at Berkeley. The other guitar player, Steve, had a job. We never really had a solid bass player. Our drummer was in and out of other bands, so it was never a full time thing, even in the beginning. We would just go play shows and have a good time doing what we were doing. Back then we weren't trying to make a career out of our band, like so many people nowadays. There are lots of people today who are actually trying to make a living through their music. Back then very few people thought of punk rock in that way. It was more like, Jeez, can we really play on that show. That would really be cool. (laughter) So no one ever got upset that I was leaving. That never became an issue until we began TEN FOOT POLE. After we finished our first record with Epitaph, it

suddenly was like "wow, hey! What's going on?"

Brett: Had you already gone to the White Sox by then?

Scott: I had been playing baseball for the White Sox in the Big Leagues for probably five or six years.

Brett: First you were with the White Sox, and then you played for the Dodgers for a couple of years, and now you're with St. Louis. What was your first major league game like? Was it that much different than the minors?

Scott: In 1989 I was in the very lowest level of the minors, and I played there all year long. The following year, there was a ruling that if you had been playing for the minor leagues for X number of years, you had to be protected on a Big League roster. So it was my year to be protected. In '89 I did well in the Minor Leagues, and my team protected me so that another team couldn't take me. I went to spring training in Florida with the Big League team. There were four more levels that I should have had to go through before getting into the Big Leagues, but I was fortunate enough to just go straight there. I started the year off in '90, and it was pretty gnarly. I got in on opening day. I think they realized that they were going to keep me forever. They

didn't want me to go back down, so they were going to keep me there. They kind of babied me for a while and took care of me and put me into situations where I wasn't going to fail and fall back down or wash out. It was scary. I was in a world all my own. I wasn't even twenty one years old, so I couldn't drink, you know. They would take the beer out of the clubhouse and shit like that. The guys would look at me kind of funny. (laughter) It was weird being the youngest guy. It was an experience.

Brett: I bet getting called out of the bullpen and running out to the mound for the first time was an exciting experience.

Scott: I labelled it "pigeons in my stomach", since they were much bigger than butterflies. I mean, I went from playing in front of what I thought were huge crowds of 1200 people to an opening day of 40,000 people. It was insane.

Brett: Your first pitch was probably a ball.

Scott: The first pitch was in fact a ball. (laughter) The second pitch popped up to shortstop and then they took me out of the game. That was it. I got one out and I left the field feeling pretty good about myself. (laughter)

Brett: You went to the "show," and that's



WHERE DO WE

all that matters.

Scott: Yeah, it was fun. It was different. Over the years, I have learned how to differentiate between the business end of it and the actual game. I really enjoy the game. I like playing from seven to ten, and that's it. I don't have anything in common with anybody I have ever played with. As far as my teammates, I don't really fit into that world. It's a whole different "scene." This is where I feel comfortable. Sitting here in this van, wearing my clothes, and being myself. If it wasn't for the enjoyment of the game from seven to ten o'clock at night, it wouldn't be worth doing. No dollar amount is worth going through the uncomfortableness of me being in that situation. I don't know what I am trying to say. It's just a different world. The cool thing is that I have been playing for a while, so I can do my own thing. Nobody says anything to me. No one fucks with me. I do my thing and that's it. It's cool.

Brett: It is cool. What other interview could I do and ask this same combination of questions? Do you field punk and sports crossover questions during interviews for both punk and sports magazines?

Scott: It's amazing how many sports guys get off on the fact that I'm in a punk rock band. They say, "Hey, tell us about your band!" I'm like, "no man, you don't understand. You have no idea. First, it's a rock'n'roll band and it has no business being on a sports page. I fuckin' hate that, I really do. I'm not too big on the whole "punk rock thing" either, but I prefer talking to someone like you than to a beat writer for a newspaper.

Brett: Someone who cares, rather than a person who is just trying to fill up pages.

Scott: Yeah, I mean I have taken a lot more heat from punk rock magazines, you know. I am not ashamed of what I do. Like I said, I enjoy the game.

Brett: When people from punk magazines talk to you, do they sit back and cop a "This guys a fuckin' millionaire" attitude.

Scott: I always read stupid shit like "what right does he have singing a song like this. He has all sorts of privileges." People I have been able to deal with on a personal level



"I couldn't play anymore 'cuz of my baseball career, which I was bitter about because that was bullshit. They should have been honest and said, "We kicked him out 'cuz we got selfish."

have gotten a different view of what is going on then the people who I've talked to over the phone or something.

Brett: I think the whole baseball thing is really cool. The fact is that you are out there playing a game that you love and you're having fun with it. Just 'cuz someone is willing to pay you x amount of dollars to put their emblem on while you are doing it, it's fucking cool. Roll with it.

Scott: Yeah, I mean, when the enjoyment of playing it every day and the competition, that energy of competing is gone, I'm not going to hang around. Fortunately, I don't have to.

It's like that "Saturday Night Live" where baseball has been very good to me.

Brett: When did the change from SCARED STRAIGHT to TEN FOOT POLE occur?

Scott: SCARED STRAIGHT did a record in '92 and afterwards we changed the name to TEN FOOT POLE. We weren't trying to avoid any sort of straightedge thing, but I think we were trying to get away from the whole 80's-style image among people that did know about the band. We just wanted to start something new. We wanted a new direction, and it was time for a name change.

Brett: I didn't know that. I thought they were two completely different bands. I didn't know that the first group just evolved into the second.

Scott: Yeah, it was all the same members. We went into the studio as SCARED STRAIGHT, recorded a record, and then we pressed three thousand copies and said, "Hey, I think we are going to change the name!" We took those three thousand copies and crossed out the name and hand wrote TEN FOOT POLE with a magic marker. That's how it happened in '92.

Brett: Did Epitaph sign the band before the name change?

Scott: No, we made the change first. This was a record we produced on our own and put out ourselves. We actually put together a package for Epitaph with that CD and sent it to Brett. We had done some shows as Scared Straight with Bad Religion. You have to remember that this was when Epitaph only had about four bands, including Bad Religion and Pennywise. Epitaph was still cool back then. It was a different world. Brett liked the record and asked if we wanted to do another record with him. We said "Fuck yeah, of course." So we recorded another CD for Epitaph.

Brett: You never reissued the self-released record? Is it still in print?

Scott: We have some copies. We have TEN FOOT POLE copies and SCARED STRAIGHT copies! In fact, we sell the SCARED STRAIGHT copies now. It was a record that I put out and funded myself, and later Fat Mike distributed it through Fat when the label only had, I think, two records at the time (Lagwagon and something else). Mike didn't really want to put it out, but he was willing to distribute 8000 or so copies of it. That was really cool. Other than that, copies were only sold at shows.

Brett: At that point, your baseball career had already moved up to another level and you were probably able to tour less and play less shows. I imagine that the other members of the band realized that things would change. Since then have you planned everything in advance in terms of what to do during the off-season? Between the end of the World Series or regular season and the beginning of spring training, do you jump right into the band, write new songs, record another record, and play

some shows?

Scott: Without realizing it, maybe that's where we were heading all along. I started playing bass in 1986, and between then and 1992 we'd been on the same part-year schedule for six or seven years. Once we did the record with Epitaph as TEN FOOT POLE, though, things quickly began to change. The other band members said they wanted to quit their jobs and make a living off of a band, and since my new schedule made that impossible they said "see ya later." That happened all at once, and it was a big shock to me.

Brett: At that point they went out and got a different singer?

Scott: Not exactly. They didn't get a new singer, but the guitarist started singing. It was cool for me. The day I was asked to leave, I called up some friends. I mean, when you are in a band together for that long you get tired, unless everyone gets along perfectly. Ten years later you may not be friends with people you were once in a band with. Or you may still be friends, but you're probably not hanging out with them constantly like you once did. We all had friends of our own, so I was in a position to call up a bunch of guys I knew and start another band.

Brett: This led to the birth of PULLEY, which supposedly started out as something of an all-star band?

Scott: That's what people say.

Brett: Who was the original line up? Didn't Matt from Face To Face play bass?

Scott: Well, the first people I called were Jordan, who plays drums in Strung Out. He was in SCARED STRAIGHT and TEN FOOT POLE for ten years, but later we replaced him with Tony, who is now in PULLEY. This is all pretty fuckin' confusing. The original line up included two guys from Strung Out, myself, and an old friend of ours who was in SCARED STRAIGHT, guitarist Mike. We had studio time booked and we were in the process of doing a record with Epitaph, but we didn't have a bass player. We had all these songs written, and everything had come together in a period of about six weeks. Matt had just been kicked out of Face To Face. TEN FOOT POLE had toured with NOFX and Face To Face across the U.S., and we had gotten along with Matt so we asked him to come down and jam on some songs. We did a

record and that's how it all kinda started. Then I left to go play baseball.

Brett: Matt's a great guy, and also a fuckin' genius.

Scott: He is a great guy. We played in San Jose last night and we hung out with the guys from No Use For A Name, and all we talked about was Matt Riddle. He's a good dude. Him and Chris Shiflet.

Brett: I'm really happy for him, since the Foo Fighters rock. Back to the birth of PULLEY.

Scott: We did a record and we didn't think much about it. You know, we just thought we'd start a band, do a record, and write some songs.

Brett: Was this sort of a side project? How serious was it? Did you even want to put on shows?

Scott: Actually, we did some shows before we even recorded the record, but it was gonna be a five months out of the year project. PULLEY was intended to be a part time band. I wasn't thinking about a full-time band after having been in a band for twelve or thirteen years with people who I felt turned on me. They rationalized their actions by saying that I couldn't play anymore 'cuz of my baseball career, which I was bitter about because that was bullshit. They should have been honest and said, "We kicked him out 'cuz we got selfish. After we went to Canada and each made two thousand dollars, we wanted to do this band full time and quit our jobs." In the end, all they did was run that band into the ground.

Brett: Are they still together?

Scott: Uh... (long pause)

Brett: I guess that answer sums up everything. (laughter)

Scott: Two of the band members quit, and Epitaph dropped them from the label. I don't really know what they're doing now.

Brett: What did you think of the post-Scott TEN FOOT POLE stuff?

Scott: I've only heard one song. I got kicked out of the band in 1995, and PULLEY recorded a record that same year. In '96, '97, '98, and '99, Pulley has been on tour. Whenever I go to a show, no matter if

it's in Canada, Europe, of the United States, I hear the same things from kids: "Hey, why did you quit Ten Foot Pole? I thought you quit 'cuz you couldn't go on tour." I'm thinking, well here we are in Denbush, Netherlands, so why are you are telling me that I can't go on tour? Obviously, they were telling everyone that I quit so it would made them look better.

Ironically, their drummer Tony had just quit the band. This happened to be good timing, since Jordan was gonna do the Strung Out thing, so I asked Tony to come back and jam with me again. We can both be in PULLEY! He was stoked as all hell. Other than the drummer and Matt Riddle, me, Jim, and Mike have been together pretty solidly, although we had a bass player for the last four years who eventually just got tired. He was a great guy. This has been the first time I have been in a band where it's been cool to be on the road. We meet people and we actually hang out and have a good time. I know that sounds crazy, but people who are in bands can probably relate a bit to what I'm saying. I mean, with five different

guys it's hard to keep being buddy, buddy for so many years. It's like a family, and you argue and fight with your bandmates the same way you argue and fight with your brothers and sisters. But so far this band has been a really cool thing.

Brett: After you don't see them for six months, perhaps you almost kind of miss it?

Scott: Actually, we're in more contact now, when I'm playing baseball. It's an everyday, ongoing thing. I get a phone call from Jim saying, "Hey! I wrote these two songs and put them on four track. I am sending them out tomorrow. Look for them in the mail!" Five minutes later, Tyler will call and say, "Hey, you know, this and that about the website and this and that." There's more conversation with them now then when I am there in person.

Brett: When PULLEY started, were you pitching for the White Sox?

Scott: Yes. I was pitching for the White

Sox in '95, and I got kicked out of the band in June. So let's say it was June 5th, and on June 6th PULLEY started. (laughter) I finished the season in October, and the White Sox didn't want to sign me back. I had some offers from other teams to go play in the Big Leagues and I took a chance and decided to sign a contract with the Dodgers. I wanted to play at home. It was like a dream to be playing at home for the Dodgers. I went for spring training in February of '96 with the Dodgers.

Brett: And at that point you went from their farm team to their...?

Scott: I just went to spring training with a minor league contract with the idea that I was going to make the Big League team, and I did. I went to LA. I never went to the Minor Leagues with the Dodgers. That was just a formality or a technicality in the contract that I meet in order to get there. At first they didn't have any room on their roster to be able to sign me to a Big League contract, so I told them I'd take my chances.

"I had some offers from other teams to go play in the Big Leagues and I took a chance and decided to sign a contract with the Dodgers."



Brett: With you being in LA at this point, were you able to actually keep the band going during the season?

Scott: I had to go on the road for a month, but we'd already tracked a record in February so when I came home to play I just went into the studio at ten in the morning and busted out the vocals. I'd stay there till one, then I'd come back after the game and stay until about two in the morning. Then I'd wake up the next morning and start again. I would do this over a period of two or three home stands. In this way I managed to get about a song a day done in three-hour spurts. We were also able to play shows when we had Saturday day games. We'd play a show on Saturday night somewhere in LA, which was really cool.

Brett: Did your teammates ever come out to your shows?

Scott: I think only one guy who was a relief pitcher has ever come to a show, and I think he came strictly for the bar end of it. That was the main reason, but it was still cool that he came.

Brett: Did you ever bring CD's into the clubhouse when you had a new release out and say, "Look guys, this is also what I do?" Or did you remain separated from the rest of the team?

Scott: Totally separated. I always tried to separate baseball from music. It's a real rarity for me to do an interview that combines my two loves. I guess I have a gut feeling about these things. I know when someone is going to do it properly, and I'm totally stoked on this thing (holding up *Hit List*).

Brett: Whereas someone from *Maximum Rock'n'Roll* might say "fuck this guy. He makes too much money playing a stupid game to make us pay any attention to his band." Who cares about the politics involved? Do you like the music or not? What does it matter what else he does? I myself am a huge fan of athletics. I spend every night in front of the TV watching basketball, football, baseball, and hockey, and sometimes I get shit for it. What difference does it make?

Scott: You see, that's what blows my mind. I can honestly and sincerely say that I really hate sports. I'm not a big fan. I

couldn't tell you jack shit about basketball or football. All I can tell you about baseball is what I see when I'm there playing, but as far as what's in the newspaper I haven't a clue. I don't watch ESPN and I don't read box scores, but what I see from 7 to 10 o'clock stays in my head, and that's what I remember later. What I observe directly is what sticks with me, but I am definitely not a sports junkie. Our bass player is the guy who tells me about new pitcher on my own team. (laughter) That's how I find out my information!

Brett: Is going out and playing these games merely an alternative to punching the clock in a factory? Is that the way you see it, since you're not into sports? Obviously you love the game itself, the competition, and the thrill you get playing it.

Scott: As I've said a few times, from 7 to 10 I can sincerely say that I love the game. I like it when the first pitch is thrown, and I like watching the last out being made. I don't like to travel, or the people I have to deal with, or the whole plastic world. Believe me, I don't play in that world. What you see is what you get. Fortunately I don't have to worry about fitting in, 'cuz I will never fit in.

Brett: Is it rare that someone doesn't fit in with the rest of the team? I'm not in the clubhouse, so I don't know this kind of stuff. As a spectator, you see a team as a team.

Scott: Well, baseball players are all pretty much the same. They are all about having nice clothes, a nice car, and a nice house. They are all about the shit.

Brett: Then you cruise in with your Bad Religion t-shirt on!

Scott: Pretty much. For the most part, I'm not a hostile or unfriendly to them. I get along with all my teammates. When I have my uniform on, we are totally teammates. Even when we don't have our uniforms on, we're cool. I think they kind of respect me for being that way: "This guy is fucking different, let him do his thing." They are cool with it. I get ragged on now and then, but I don't try to rock the boat. They don't ask me to go out with them, 'cuz they know my answer.

Brett: Obviously, you make distinctions between individuals. Still, it seems kind

of weird, since in the eighties LA punk scene the jocks hated the punks and the punks hated the jocks.

Scott: But I spent my whole high school life playing baseball. Down in the quad all the punk rock kids would hang out, and the wrestling guys would come over and kick our asses. Our guitar player at the time was this big wrestler guy, and some other huge jock would be kicking the rest of our asses but would leave him alone. The entire baseball team was up there causing trouble. When I was a junior and I started thinking that I might want to become a decent pitcher, my coach came up to me and said he didn't think it was right. He thought that I should be hanging out with my teammates, away from the quad. Five minutes later, I walked with Mike into the PE office and took my shirt off and told my coach that I wasn't playing baseball anymore. I mean, it was a joke. He was telling me who to hang out with. At the time that he was telling me this, there were some guys with spikey hair rolling taco sauce on the wall. I hate jocks. I'm not a big basher, but I just don't like the whole thing.

Brett: Dealing with high school jocks is one thing, but dealing with the type of people that you have to deal with now, who have a few million dollars to back up their stupid fucking habits, it must be intensified.

Scott: What bothers me the most is how they treat the little guy. There are these little clubhouse guys who bust their fucking asses; they are there to serve the players. Those guys are the real backbone of baseball. When the players order these guys around, it eats me up inside. Now I'm in a position where I can make comments like that, but I can also start a trend about how one is supposed to respect these guys. The younger guys can stop and think, "Here's a guy who has been around for about ten years and he's not an asshole. A lot of the younger guys have been raised with the Offspring and the Rancid, so they're kind of hip to what I've been doing for the last 16 years. It's kind of cool to have some teammates who are kind of into that shit. I've started to notice that change in the last year or two.

Brett: So let's get back to PULLEY, which I'm sure you have been dying to do for the last half hour. (laughing)

Scott: I kind of got off on that baseball

tangent.

Brett: It's very cool. There is a noticeable difference between the sound of SCARED STRAIGHT and PULLEY. It even changed somewhat from SCARED STRAIGHT to TEN FOOT POLE, which you said was essentially the same band. Was that record a reflection on the changes in your life?

Scott: Yeah, that record was definitely different. It was a mixture of older songs and the newer direction we were going in. The first TEN FOOT POLE record that we did on Epitaph was drastically different from anything we had done as SCARED STRAIGHT. I don't know if it was just what was coming out at the time or what. I don't know if PULLEY was really all that different. It's more enjoyable to sit down and write songs with these guys then it ever was with the other band. They started to think that we had to do this and that, but we didn't have to do anything. It became less fun. I can specifically remember that first phone call to everybody, when I suggested starting a band, making no money, having fun, writing music, and doing it four or five months out of the year. It was like I was in two bands now, where one existed for four

months full time and we literally shut off everything that we were doing, and then it became a twelve month thing where we were writing music for PULLEY. The songwriting definitely changed. I don't know exactly why, but that's how it went. It was just a different mix of people.

Brett: Does Epitaph treat you guys differently, as opposed to a band that is functioning and gigging throughout the whole year? Do they view it as a part time project?

Scott: To them it all comes down to business, numbers on paper. If we're selling as many records as somebody else, then they don't take us any less seriously. We've probably done more shows in the last four years then your average band, not like the headlining bands. We've put out a new record every year, we've toured every chance we get during our annual four month period. Average bands probably tour four out of their twelve month period, and instead we tour for four straight months. So if you add it all up, with us also putting out a record, we've done more than the average amount. We just don't stop. We go on tour to Europe, Canada, and the U.S., and then we record a record. I don't think Epitaph has treated us badly or differently

than their other bands. I'm sure they treat the bigger bands like Pennywise and NOFX better, but then they deserve it, don't they? Those larger bands sell the records.

Brett: This last season, when you moved from the Dodgers to the St. Louis Cardinals, did that affect what was going on? Obviously, you were in LA before, so you were able to maintain closer contact with what was going on. At this point, you have to move halfway across the country for six or seven months. Is that a strain?

Scott: Fuck, at first it really sucked. I was driving thirty minutes to work and thirty minutes home so I could sleep in my own bed for three years, which was a fantasy life. Then I packed up and left. But we knew what we getting into, and we knew what we had to do. We had to commit to the music and the mail, and we have. We actually might be in the studio soon, since we're getting ready to do another record. The cool thing is that we recorded this record in April and didn't have time to play shows for this record, so even though it's an old record it feels new. We were committed to the band, and it wasn't too much of a strain because I was there and they were here. The conversation between us still goes on everyday.

Brett: What was it like going to St. Louis a year after the team had been rejuvenated and one man - Mark McGuire - had altered the history of baseball? Was there a lot of comradery? Did you notice a difference in the fans? Was it different there?

Scott: I think that the biggest difference is being in the Midwest. Even here, in San Francisco, you've got a transplanted team; they are not originally from here. LA had fans.

Brett: Where do you see PULLEY going? Are you going to change your music style or do you foresee consistency and longevity?

Scott: The guys in PULLEY are content with what is going on. We totally love what we are doing. We love writing songs and playing shows (which is number one for us), and there is no "fuck, we've got to make it!" There's no competition. We are happy with what we are doing. Those people who come to our shows because they love our music, that's who we're doing it for. Our motive in this band is to



have fun, fun, fun.

Brett: Lots of other bands that aren't in that enviable position. They need the band to pay for rent or practice space. It depends on what level their band is on, and what their attitudes are.

Scott: We've all been in bands for a long time. There's no pressure about how to make money. Everything has fallen into place in a good way. We feel that we've written good music and put out good records because we haven't tried too hard. We've been having a good time and really enjoying what we're doing. There isn't any pressure to do this and that in order to make money.

Brett: That allows you guys to do whatever the fuck you want, musically-speaking.

Scott: Exactly, we're just writing what we write. We're not trying to mold ourselves after any band that has made it big. We're just doing what we do. Don't get me wrong, we do care if people like us, but that isn't our sole purpose. Those bigger bands are good and have influenced us at one time or another, but we're certainly not

trying to sound like them.

Brett: So you've talked about not being the biggest sports fan and being somewhat separated or detached from the rest of your team in their daily lives and activities. But it had to be somewhat of a thrill to go pitch to McGuire and others during practice. Didn't that mean anything to you?

Scott: It was more of a thrill to be on a different team pitching against them, because being on the same team you don't really have the opportunity to pitch against them.

Brett: Okay, being around them.

Scott: Well yeah. Out of all of them, Mark McGuire is probably the most down-to-earth guy. He's the only one of those kind of guys who just wants to be normal. He's fucked, cuz he can't be anymore. He's the kind of guy that says, "Hey! Do you want to go grab a beer here?" He can't do it, but he wants to. He doesn't feed off his own popularity. He's almost bummed out about it. He's not really the type of person the media portrays him as.

Brett: If you could choose between headlining a gig that you see as the pinnacle of punk rock success, or playing a show with your favorite bands to as big of a crowd as you want, or pitching during the ninth inning in game seven of the World Series, what would you do?

Scott: I would give my pitching arm to have played at the 930 Club in D.C. with Minor Threat. You've got to understand that in baseball, you are just one out of 25 people. To play in a band is much more personal. Music and baseball are so different. I can't place a greater weight on either. If I had a choice to go on tour and not play baseball, I would go on tour. If there is one person singing one of our songs tonight, all the way down the highway we'll be going, "fuck, that was great." In the baseball world it's more like, "what have you done for me lately?" If there is one person singing along with us here, then that's the reason why we came. To me that's way more gratifying than being part of a larger unit that is at war. ⊕

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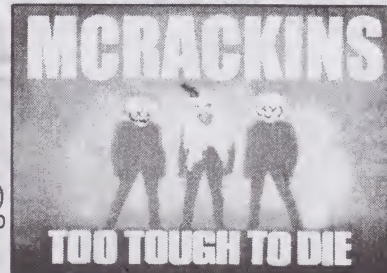
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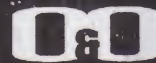


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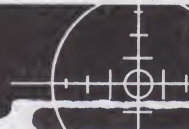
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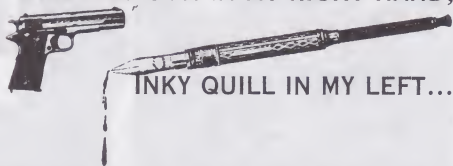
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This will be a brief column due to many factors: several books that I am writing and editing, two other magazines I frequently build, a new office in Downtown Los Angeles, a completely overhauled website, a marriage proposal, travel plans for three nationwide trips and a variety of other endeavors. I will briefly detail the aforementioned projects at the end of this col, but for now, let us quickly, initially tackle that most exasperating facet of self-publishing: distribution and distributors.

The worst storm weathered by the ever-frail zine world was the Fine Print fiasco. A few of us saw the writing on the wall and got out early, incurring only minimal losses. Some got burned badly and departed to cut their losses, but a great majority sank with the ship or came damn close to drowning as they realized that the rats that ran the ship had long ago departed — with much of the loot, to boot. Then there was the brief disaster with The Nose, a debacle which burned a few large and famous zine editors; since that distributor came and went faster than the time it took to finish this

SMOKING GUN IN MY RIGHT HAND,



INKY QUILL IN MY LEFT...

NO TIME FOR DICKIN' ROUND.

single sentence about it, and thus is worth no more mention (at present). Now a new imbroglio seems to be on the horizon, and given my ability to divine zine disasters, I have enough confidence in stating that Desert Moon (hereafter occasionally recognized as "DM") is more than annoying. Although DM has finally paid off a few rags (for example, Tom Wheeler's Alternative Press Review had to greatly postpone publication in early 2000 due to the continued nonpayment courtesy of DM, payments that allegedly were in the low thousands of dollars), I continue to hear indignant accusations. Also, DM's relatively new PR/damage control officer is none other than ex-Fine Print employee Tom Lupoff.

But above it all is the \$200 question. Having forced upon their distributed publishers an annual fee of \$200 each, the only thing that can be shown for such an outrageous ransom is a cover scan of the website, the scans of which, once done, may be left for a year or two. A fine point is the rag I publish: on the Desert Moon website there is only the Angry Thoreauan #22 cover (from September, 1998); AT27 is just now hitting the stands. Communication with DM has long been difficult at best, but it is sure to get worse now that all enquires are referred to Lupoff, who will singlehandedly field approximately 700 accounts.

Yes, approximately 700 accounts, according to a recent quote from Desert Moon's website: "Desert Moon Periodicals is a national distributor of nearly 700 magazines and zines..." which is quite a bit for one person to accommodate — especially if he goes on vacation for a week or two (leaving all account enquires in limbo until after he returns). As for the aforementioned \$200 question, one need but do a quick bit of math to realize that the answer to how much Desert Moon is pulling in annually from the publishers ALONE is approximately \$140,000.00. Not bad for a proverbial day's work, eh? And then there are the monies made from

those titles that are sold, the \$0.40 per pound re-shipping fee and \$0.10 per copy handling fee, and then the exorbitant 55% discount. For a \$3 magazine that weighs nearly ten ounces (for example, an 88-page standard book that has 50 lb. bookstock and a 100lb glossy cover), this means that, before shipping costs to DM and without considering the \$200 annual fee, each sold copy nets but \$1.05. Occasionally, DM springs little costs such as the 1998 \$15 debit "for promotional charges incurred for Borders Books" 1997 magazine promo," a campaign about which I knew nothing until early September 1998 — nearly a year later! — and about which I still know nothing save the fact that I was charged fifteen dollars for the damn thing. All things considered, the result is literally chump change that is handed over as late as 210 days after the subsequent issue is received by Desert Moon. (This brings up another point of contention. When I signed the contract with DM in mid-1995, it was agreed that they would "settle for each issue 60 days after receipt of the subsequent issue." I do not know when or how it was stretched to nearly four times that already lengthy time.) Bringing such "integrity to the business of magazine distribution," as Desert Moon blatantly states on their website, is nothing less than appalling. What is worse is that, alongside all the propaganda (on Desert Moon's website) which addresses potential publishing clientele (not to mention the requirement that one must submit five copies of one's publication for the privilege of being screwed out of a fair amount of cash annually), there is no mention of all the costs that will be incurred should one wish to try out DM's services. Apparently, the folk at DM know that such demands are suspect, or they would be up front with their outrageous requirements. For those of us that learned belatedly about the new policy, we were already out of \$200.00 before we had a chance to back out and after being told that the fee was for a little more than a review and a cover scan in the annual print catalogue (I would think that for an annual \$200.00 fee I would get a scan for each issue; were I to charge my customers that much for a single scan — and I have been doing graphic design for many years now — they would not hesitate to go elsewhere, as even high-end drum scans cost approximately \$35 towards the higher end of the consumer rate scale (for the trade is much lower, I should state). As for the review, I have been unable to acquire a copy of a recent DM catalogue to see if there is indeed a review.) Then there are the other, ahem, benefits: "website listing and link to a publisher's website" (What if said pubber has no website? And for those of us that do, the few seconds — literally — that is required for such a task makes for an astronomical hourly rate), "telemarketing to retail accounts" (I have not been told what exactly this means, since my enquires have gone unanswered), and various other "amenities" that liken DM to any municipal institution: taxes (the publication discount, reshipping and handling fees) are taken out to maintain the firm, but if one requests even a little help from it, one is charged a second time (the annual fee). After all is said and done, DM gives writers and publishers this vague assurance: "We would not ask for your cooperation with these new terms without compelling reasons to do so..." Most of the above-mentioned "services" are part of the package that other distributors are compensated via the discounted cover price, and the failure to oblige even the cover scan crap surely negates any reason to believe that DM should have us believe that these are "compelling reasons" to remain with their distribution service. It is best summed up as pay-to-play.

Of further concern is the return policy. It was bad enough that there was no return policy, just a paltry postcard affidavit policy, one which "certified" nothing more than issues and said copies returned are correct and that they would not be resold under any circumstances. It has also been stated that returns are costly, hence the affidavit postcards. But if cost is the concern, one may well wonder why DM has elected to send

hundreds of zines from New Mexico (where it is based) to Ohio in order to preserve rather than destroy the unsold copies. Granted, the copies are being sent to the Popular Culture Library, but if DM can send hundreds of rags halfway across the continent, why then can they not return unsold copies to the few of us that care to re-stock our dwindling back issue inventories? What of the waste resultant of redundancy, whereby editors/publishers personally send magazines to the Library? And why does Desert Moon not inform the clientele — of which Angry Thoreauan is among — or at least announce their charitable amenity on the DM webpage addressed to potentially distributed publishers? It is bad enough that affidavit returns imply that the self- and independently published publications are naught more than glorified press releases, but when such a perspective comes from a distributor that proclaims to have a "solid reputation as the source for alternative press" and one discovers that said distro quite possibly spends much money to re-post full magazines halfway across the country without disclosing the action to its publishers and potential clients, one cannot help but be suspicious, especially when all else is considered.

I imagine that a fair amount of small press/self-publishers will not be able to continue their relationships with Desert Moon not out of principle but due to the fiduciary footing being pulled from beneath them. The slick rags that rely on advertising (as opposed to those of us that rely on a combination of ad crap and readership/newsstand sales, or those so seemingly foolish as to be the dwindling minority that dare to rely exclusively on newsstand and/or subscription sales) will not be hit so hard and will have enough staff to insure that DM will do what it states, while small press/zine editors — such as myself — will not have that kind of time, let alone the resources. It is hard enough to repeatedly ask for mere answers or to call constantly so as to eventually collect the monies owed for almost ancient past issues. And it is not as if there will be much of a chance for those pubbers that hope to sneak beneath DM's radar: the collection method is not unlike the way the IRS jacks this nation's constituents: the fees are extracted from the monies owed long before the eventual spare shillings trickle down into the artists' shabby pockets.

So, for the next *Hit List*, there will be an even deeper investigation and column. I have already tracked down two former Fine Print employees — both of whom stayed on board until close to the very end — and am hoping to gain some insight as to that small press Titanic. In the meantime, feel free to send in your own stories about Desert Moon (be they good or bad); in either case, they should be remarkable. Also desired are incidents regarding other distributors (also remarkable; please, no comments on distros that are no longer operating). Note, however, that no anonymous accounts will be considered; if you cannot divulge your name and publication/shoppe name, the tale is not worth telling.

As for what I am doing these days (other than Angry Thoreauan and this *Hit List* col), the big project is a collaboration between myself and the nine lives of Phony Lid Publications publisher Machine Gun Kelly. This book will be out in spring 2001 and shall be a compelling collection of zinester war stories. If you have a tale of terror such as moving to a metropolis after a messy divorce involving a spouse, a house and two other lovers only to find oneself ensconced within a vicious gang territory and succumbing to crack cocaine but without ever stopping

publishing, then send in the damn thing! Of course, potential contributions need not be so dramatic as the above example, but please do keep to yourself the trivialities of mothers confiscating bindery items and scrappy zines. A national tour shall follow once the book is out. We will be in contact with all contributors prior to the book's release and certainly before the tour.

For myself, I have a small slew of books soon to be released: *Book of Quit*, *I Guard Garbage*, *The Red Zone is for Parking* and *Los Angeles Downtown Diaries*. Before those hit the shelves (and by the time this *Hit List* is out), Angry Thoreauan #27 shall be available. The cover has been done by Peter Bagge of Hate Comics fame, and the theme is "Failed Again! "...the sequel." It features some great zine writers as well as the usual unabridged ranticles — this time revealing the real reason beneath the RIAA's campaign against Napster/MP3.com; some speculation as to "What Would Dave Do?" were he still in Metallica and discovered that dim drummer extraordinaire Lars Ulrich suddenly served the birdie that threatened to usurp independent bands nationwide; why so many folks are "Chumps for Charity"; and why we should do all we can to whittle away the state-sanctioned monopoly known as the U.S. Postal "Service." There will also be tonnes of reviews and who knows what kind of other insanity, so spit forth the four dollars (six for the foreigners stuck abroad!) before all available issues are sold out.

One other project that has been sucking up too much time has been the recently overhauled Angry Thoreauan website:

< www.angrythoreauan.com >

It shall soon reach back thirteen years and encompass all the articles — good and bad — of countless magazines/books in which I have wasted pages with my wit (or lack of it), and shall also have a fair amount of material that was refused or edited due to space. I should also mention the URL of my partner in zine crime, he who spreads the poison known as Phony Lid Publications and who is also responsible for Pick Pocket

Books and Vagabond: < www.FyUoCuK.com > Yes, really; that is no typo, just remember to read between the lines.

Lastly, please DO NOT send letters, zines, etc., meant for this column to Brett nor Jeff at *Hit List*. Having more than three businesses myself, I know that the last thing they wish to do is forever (or even temporarily!) forward mail simply because some folk failed to send intended correspondence to the address at the end of respective columns. To boot, I am again homeless but have recently

opened an office in Downtown Los Angeles (and already doubled its floor space), and am overwhelmed with more than I should have bitten off in regards work. If a reply is wished, an SASE is required. Or simply email me and I will get back to you as soon as possible. (And do note that I create — whole or in part — no less than 23 publications per year, every year, thus making an immediate reply basically impossible. Please have patience.) ⊕

Rev. Randall Tin-ear

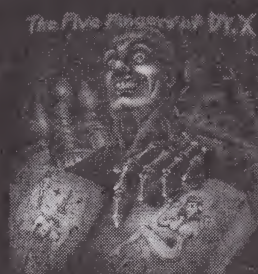
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V/A

FIVE FINGERS OF DR. X

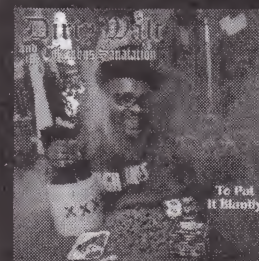
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Dude...this Dave guy really needs to find some new topics...

To paraphrase something Bale once wrote — I wasn't going to talk about American Steel this time, but alas, Vic Bondi just couldn't leave me alone. First of all, Vic knows I like and respect him, and he's created a lot of amazing music over the years. He's been really cool to me, treated me like an equal and a friend, and when he sent me his last column, said that I had a hand in inspiring it but that I shouldn't be offended. So Vic, I'm not offended, but Jesus Christ man, did you have to cut so close to the bone? Actually, I'm glad you did, because I agree with you on a lot of the basic tenets of your arguments, I just think your examples don't hold water.

Since you started with Jawbreaker, I'll start there, too. Now I admit that they are a bit of a sacred cow as far as punk music of the last ten years go, and as such, they're a great target to take aim at. But as far as them being a Pegboy ripoff? Hell...they're contemporaries. In fact, as Blake Schwarzenbach said to me last week (though not particularly offended and rather jokingly), "Geez! We were a band *before* Pegboy! Vic's an historian! He should know that!" The guys in Pegboy are a bit older, and no doubt someone in Jawbreaker probably listened to more than a bit of Naked Raygun back in the day, but shit, man, Haggerty's got one of the most massive guitar sounds ever laid to wax — Huge Bigness, indeed. Who *wouldn't* want that? And yeah, Pegboy's a criminally underrated band. At their best, (*Strong Reaction*, *3 Chord Monte*, *Fore*), they stood up to Jawbreaker's best work, and occasionally even beat them ("Strong Reaction" is one of my absolute favorite songs of all time). I'd still maintain that Jawbreaker's left a stronger legacy of great punk, but even though they're my favorite band (along with the Clash), they had their moments of weakness. I think you're *totally* off-base, however, in your assessment that Jawbreaker copped Pegboy's style and *tried* to adopt their attitude. That's like saying Black Sabbath and Led Zeppelin ripped each other off. I mean, Bonham was in a band with Tony Iommi at one point; Steve Albini, who produced *24 Hour Revenge Therapy*, was in Pegboy for a short while. Santiago Durango from Big Black was in an early incarnation of Naked Raygun. Being from Chicago, Vic, you know all this shit better than I do. Jawbreaker and Pegboy toured together. AoF and Leatherface played together. You like Burning Airlines because they do the kind of stuff you like to play. So why isn't it okay for Jawbreaker and Pegboy to be similar bands? It's all about similar reference points and concurrency rather than theft or a lack of originality.

Yes, Jawbreaker, for all their occasional Slint-esque bombast (the entire *Bivouac* disc, anyone?) was definitely and unquestionably a more subtle band than Pegboy. And yeah, they didn't have what you termed the "can't give a shit barroom-brawler attitude" that Pegboy embodies. They were a more restrained band, but as J. Robbins once said, they could also sound like a freight train. Musically, it was that soft/loud dynamic...that bitter restraint combined with wide-open outpourings of magnificently noisy, riding-the-edge-of-atonal-without-ever-quite-falling-over mass sound that made Jawbreaker an incredibly special band. And I think, Vic, if you look closer, Jawbreaker *did* have their own identity. In fact, Jawbreaker's identity was, in a sense, a band in search of an identity. Look how Blake Schwarzenbach's writing has evolved over the last eleven or twelve years — from "Whack and Blite" through to "Four Corned Night". Look at the lyrics. You're looking at a guy searching for something. And that was a large part of the beauty of Jawbreaker (and by extension, Jets to Brazil). You had this guy nailing exactly how he was feeling but didn't quite know how he was going to get to point B. Hell, more than half the time in Jawbreaker songs, the attitude is like, "Well, I'm at point A. I know *exactly* where Point A is, but where on God's green Earth is motherfucking point B?"

And that's what I think a lot of people relate to in Blake's music — that idea that he so completely defines the Point A in their lives that they're able to take that, feel understood and less alone and move forward to Point B, wherever that might be. It might be presumptuous to try to speak for every other Jawbreaker and Jets to Brazil fan in the world, but looking back, I can see all the times the music's done that for me. I remember one time, in college, I was hurting really bad. I mean, I was on the edge. It was the first time I ever considered killing myself. I managed to talk myself out of it and get to sleep. I had a stereo with a timer on it which I used as an alarm clock (as my parents and ex-girlfriends can attest, waking me up is a fairly Herculean task). *Dear You* was in the CD player. I woke up to "Save Your Generation". And you know what? That song gave me the



zero
cred
w/ dave
johnson

strength to make it through the day, and ultimately, make it to the rest of my life — just as your song "Alloy" helped me move through the days at my shitty corporate job.

And I think, in some ways, that's the same case with American Steel. If you read the interview we did with them, you'd know that they'd never heard Leatherface until they were compared to them. If you listen to the first AmSteel album, you hear a young band with some great ideas, having fun, being drunk, and occasionally stumbling across the odd brilliant song in the process (though they *refuse* to play the Op Ivy-esque, but still fantastic "Decycling" anymore — despite my constant entreaties — because they claim they've forgotten how to play upstrokes). When you listen to *Rogue's March*, it's the sound of a band at a crossroads. They've *realized* they have talent. They've realized that people actually *give* a shit that they're a band. And maybe, in a way, they *knew* they had to make a great record because at the time, it might've been the last one Ryan ever got to make. And yes, Vic, I'll admit to you that American Steel isn't a *blindingly* original band. They've got their influences, and especially on their first record, they wear 'em on their sleeves. But the guys in that band are all roughly around my age, and they've got the same belief that I do — none of us are pretending that there's anything completely new going on in punk rock, but they believe that there's something still worth doing — if you can get up there with a guitar and play a song with heart, feeling and maybe offer a little insight into what goes on inside us as humans, that's a fucking worthwhile thing to do. They do that, and they do that *very* well. Ruairi and Ryan are gifted lyricists and great songwriters. They're not the best musicians in the world, but they're competent enough to do what they do well. Don't penalize us because of our age. You helped build a house, Vic, and we moved in. And the posters we hang on our walls, the colors we paint our doors, the shades we hang on our windows? Those are all things you have no control over.

And as for Epitaph? Okay, sure, if you don't like BR, you're probably not going to like NOFX, Pennywise, the Offspring, Millencolin, etc. I mean, hell the only band I like out of that group is NOFX. But it's patently ignorant to say that Epitaph ruined punk rock. Epitaph had a fluke hit with the Offspring, Warners had a fluke hit with Green Day, and Gurewitz managed to leverage his position by using the money he made from the

HIT SQUAD

Offspring to promote the shit out of Rancid just as they made the greatest record of their career. If you wanna blame anyone for ruining punk rock, why not just go back to Kurt Cobain in '91? I mean, not *every* slab o' wax that's ever come out on Epitaph sounds like Bad Religion. What about the Red Aunts? What about Clawhammer? What about the Dwarves? What about the Cramps? The Humpers? The New Bomb Turks? And then what about Hellcat? And Tom Waits? And of course, what about the Burping Heart deal that allowed your prized Refused record to be widely heard on these shores? Yes, Epitaph made a shitload of money selling SoCal-style skatepunk to the masses, but they also put a lot of money into projects for history's sake, such as buying and rereleasing the Frontier catalog. I haven't heard much about this in a couple years, but I know that Gurewitz was at one time involved in a project to preserve the old Masque space in LA. Epitaph's only crime seems to be that they made a lot of money and wanted to make more. Why are you working for Microsoft, Vic? Why do I accept corporate clients in my graphic design business? Face it, to varying degrees, we're all guilty here. As Woody Guthrie once wrote, "I've sung this before and I'll sing it again," I think a lot of us in the punk scene want some kind of artistic purity, integrity and fairness. And we point fingers without acknowledging our own role in what we're doing in our own lives as being part of the problem, whether that's what we buy, where we live, where we work, how we eat, whether we own a car or not. Yeah, I've got problems with some of the behaviors I engage in, but it's also a matter of looking at the lesser of two (or four, or six, or eight) evils. Unless you're gonna live in the woods, be completely self-sufficient and never buy anything, you're going to be part of the machine in some sense.

Bro-test and Survive

That said, you can pick and choose your battles. I hate the fucking bro-hams who show up at punk gigs as much as you do. Whatever my head says about egalitarianism and people's inherent right to do what they want, in my heart, I feel like they've got no right to be there. For all my faults (and Lord knows they're myriad), I can't help thinking that those dipshits are faultier than me. And I think it's ironic that the man carrying the current "What We Want Is Free" banner as far as the culture wars go is Shawn Fanning, a Dave Mathews and Metallica loving, cap-sporting teenager who batted .750 on his high school baseball team. Dude drives a customized RX7, is a jock, and has pretty terrible taste in music. I'm guessing he calls his friends and associates "bro". Basically, he's probably the motherfucker I'd deck as he kicked me in the head crowd-surfing at the Warped Tour to Green Day's Hit Single. Personally, I like physical records and record stores, and as a designer, I love album artwork. I've also got a fairly low-bandwidth internet connection, so mp3s hold little or no allure for me. But you know what? Fanning's got the RIAA and the Five Corporations scared shitless. I mean, the only major consumer-electronics firm with a very large vested interest in record sales, Sony, just came out with a tiny mp3 player using their pretty astonishing Memory Stick technology. But you know what? The media it uses isn't a standard Memory Stick (which can hold any type of file), it's called a "Magic Gate" memory stick, and only holds SDMI-compliant files. Obviously, they're hoping that neat removable-media technology and the mighty Sony brand will entice people to buy a player that only rocks(?) industry-sanctioned recordings. My prediction? Though it'll undoubtedly play the copy of "Sleep Now In the Fire" that

you downloaded from Sony.com, I can't help but remember Sony's other superior, high-tech marvel, the Betamax, and its ignominious demise.

Yeah, they're scared as fuck of Fanning. Articles of Faith, Jones Very and Alloy never posed that kind of threat, Jawbreaker never did it either, Rage Against the Machine doesn't do it, MRR never did it (though not for lack of trying), and though I'd love to pretend that we could, *Hit List* will, in all probability, never do it.

Will you lay off the East Bay Hardcore for once, asshole?

I was at Gilman the other night talking to Jade from AFI, joking with him about how they've morphed into a Metal band. Suddenly, this girl started attacking me, saying "Punk rock is all about saying whatever the hell you want, and AFI's saying what they want to say, so who are you to call them Metal?" Uhh...because they *are* Metal. Doesn't change the fact that AFI's a great band and are great people, but they made a Metal record. It was also the best record they've ever made, in my opinion. I'm not slamming them for doing it, I just think it's funny. It's also true that all four of those guys have a deep and binding commitment to punk rock — they're *not* Metal People, they just made a Metal album. I mean shit, I've spent much of the last month listening to *Holy Diver*, for God's sake. It doesn't *get* any more Metal than Dio. Those Norwegian Black Metal motherfuckers can think they're flyin' the flag by burning churches and killing each other all they want, but the man who *really* is a soldier for the forces of Metal is none other but the Elf Himself, Ronnie James. He makes Davey Havok look like Steve Ignorant for God's sake! The point is, I can say AFI's Metal all I want, and you can claim Jawbreaker and AmSteel are derivative all you want, but at the end of the day, all three of those bands have made music that's meaningful to people; have helped them get through the day; have touched something deep inside them, and quite possibly are the only reason that some of those people are still here to tell you how much they love those bands today. I mean, I *do* realize that Michael Jackson once brought a kid out of a coma by singing to him, and I've known people who, after I played them the best records in my collection, would still rather listen to Third Eye Blind. And I understand how flabbergasting it seems to you that although I love Leatherface, I'd generally rather listen to AmSteel. And not to take anything from Stubbs at all, as he's a totally rad guy and a fucking amazing songwriter and musician, but American Steel, as a band, speaks to my experience more than Leatherface does. Same situation with the Pegboy vs. Jawbreaker argument. Maybe it's because AmSteel and Jawbreaker

are both Bay Area bands, and those guys are all friends or acquaintances. Then again, this portion of my argument could be shot down, because inexplicably, somewhere, there are millions of people who think that "Baby One More Time" and "All The Small Things" speak to their experience more than "Minutes to Hours" or "Every New Morning." Then again, maybe those people aren't drunks who can't turn around without getting dumped.

I've spent much of the last month listening to Holy Diver, for God's sake.

We always knew the kid'd eventually go *completely* emo in these pages...

I've been going through a fairly rough period in my life. And I've come to a lot of realizations. Some of them trite, but though they're old in words to me, they're new in action. And I've realized I can bitch about the stuff I've got no control over, but it's fucking pointless wasting my time trying to control it. Don't get me wrong — there are things that I'd give practically anything to be able to control right now; behavior of friends, actions of ex-girlfriends, Jade Tree letting me design records for them, etc, but I can't, and I've gotta accept that. And I think, Vic, that's what's going on with you. You put your heart and soul into something

DAVE JOHNSON

real and valuable. It was real and valuable to you, and it was obviously real and valuable to a lot of other people who connected with your musical and lyrical ideas, thoughts and feelings. And if imitation's the sincerest form of flattery, Vic, you should be fucking floored. And maybe you don't care about being flattered in the way that you have been; you wanna see the next new great thing. And that's fine, but maybe it's not in punk rock. Doesn't change the fact that there are a lot of great people in the community with a lot of great ideas, big hearts, and open minds, but there are a lot of imitators and hangers-on, as well. I mean, shit, look at you and me — we're writing for *Hit List*.

This magazine isn't astoundingly original; it's following in the traditions of rags like *Punk*, *Sniffin' Glue*, *MRR*, *Flipside*, *Slash*, *Ugly Things* etc. I mean sure, Brett, Jeff and I (and now Justin) put our own spin on it, but at the end of the day, it's a fucking punkzine. At the end of the day, you're still there with a guitar in your hands. Maybe I'm missing something, but I haven't seen you adopt the turntable or the theremin as your instrument as choice (and no, playing with Tom Morello doesn't count). That doesn't, however, mean that you haven't done something incredibly valuable. It doesn't diminish that for a fucking second. Yeah, sure, you're probably inspired some shitty bands in your lifetime, and maybe you've even inspired them for what you'd consider the wrong reasons. But at the end of the day, you helped people (including myself) find some meaning in their lives — best case scenario, you've helped people find meaning, who in turn helped others find meaning. And if you you wanna overthrow the Mandarinate (as you said in the last issue), you've gotta consider your own part in it. You've gotta consider what you did that was of value and what you did that wasn't of value. And then you've gotta look at it from perspectives beyond that of the academic concession that makes you *look* conciliatory and instead understand just how conciliatory you really are or aren't. To paraphrase (and slightly distort) Fugazi, Vic, we can't be who you were, so you'd better start being just who you are. And that's more than some motherfucker sitting around and bitching and hiding behind quotes from Emerson because he used to be a mighty

punk rocker and now he's working for the corporation America loves to hate. Fuck that, man. You're *still* Vic Bondi. And in a weird way, we're all your children — in the same way that we're Ian MacKaye's children, and Johnny Thunders' children and Jeff Pezzati's children and Aaron Cometbus' children. And you've got a right to complain about the directions your progeny have taken. You've got a right to sit there on the porch with your Les Paul and your Winchester loaded with rock salt and growl, "Get off my lawn!" But you know what the bitch of the whole situation is? We're on your lawn and we're staying for awhile. Some of us will leave. Some of us will die and be buried right there. Some of us will yank a piece of turf out of the ground, carefully place it in our pockets and plant it somewhere else.

When it's all said and done, Vic, all we can do is pour our hearts into an art that matters to us, do our damndest to be understood (if being understood is our goal, although as graphic artist David Carson famously said, "You cannot *not* communicate," which probably explains Bob Log III), and hope that people pick up on what we're saying that's of value. The last song on the new Jets to Brazil album (which I'm sure you'd hate, though it was produced by your friend (and a guy who counts you as a hero) J. Robbins), basically consists of shout-outs to Blake's family, bandmates, and at the end, other people involved in the scene in one way or another. And although it may sound trite, to my ears, Blake's rephrasing of these adages ultimately comes off fresh in a world (and a record) so filled with angst. The lines? "To all the bands who mean what they say: It's not what you sell, it's what you make. I love you stranger, though it might not always show. There's a lot of good in you, I know." ⊕

-XOXO

Davey


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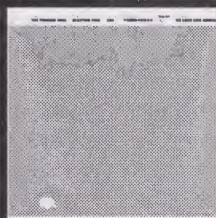
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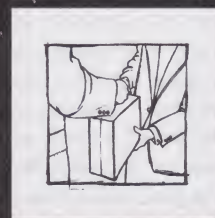
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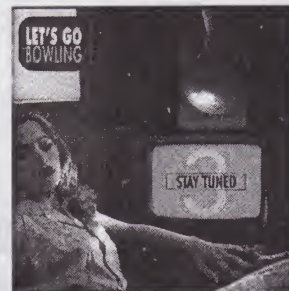
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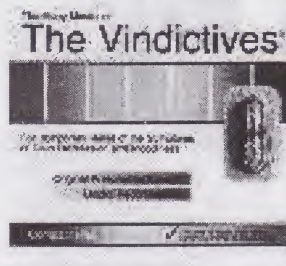
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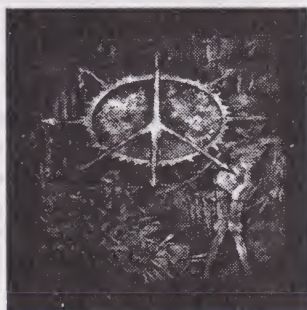


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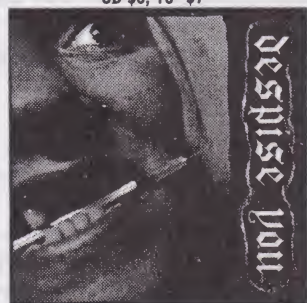
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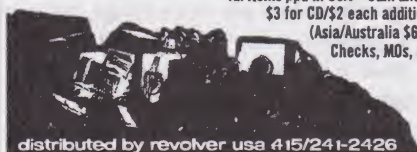
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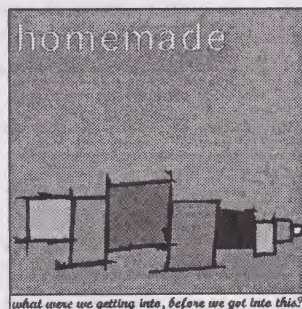


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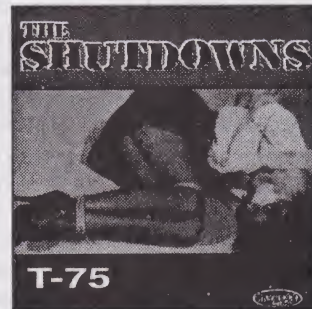
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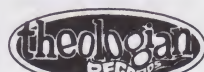
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is napster



The Napster debate has pitted artists against fans to the point where lawsuits have been filed in what can easily be called, without any reservations, the biggest music-related debate since Tipper Gore's McCarthy-like 1985 Senate Rock Hearings and the introduction of the recordable, blank cassette tape. Metallica's Lars Ulrich and the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) have undertaken a crusade to shut down Napster for alleged copyright infringements since initiating legal action back in December. On July 27th U.S. District Judge Marilyn Hall Patel granted a landmark preliminary injunction against Napster. "They've created a monster, for lack of a better term, and that's the consequence they face, I can't just let it go on," commented Patel after handing down her decision, which was expected to shut down Napster Inc. Napster struggled to allow its users to play their downloaded music even louder, and a surprising July 28th appeals court victory granted to Napster allowed the program to stay online, pending trial. The see-saw of litigation continues, but is Napster the true enemy in this controversy? One doesn't have to look further to answer this question than at the heartless Recording Industry Association of America.

The Napster controversy first arose when Metallica was hard at work in the studio polishing "I Disappear", their contribution to the "Mission Impossible 2" soundtrack. Drummer Lars Ulrich became enraged once he discovered that the demos for the unfinished song were already being traded on Napster, and he immediately

sought legal action. "We don't know how the music got out, but somewhere in the chain of things it was leaked. But when we found out that people were trading these songs on this thing called Napster, which we hadn't even heard of, we felt a line had been crossed," said Ulrich in his contributing piece to *Newsweek* magazine. To further solidify his point Ulrich added "We are not a product. We aren't toothpaste." Oh, such eloquence!

What Mr. Ulrich fails to realize is that Metallica, and countless other artists enslaved by the major labels that comprise the RIAA, are already products. Multi-million dollar acts usually see thirty cents on the dollar for their efforts because greedy label executives seek to better their own lifestyles and climb the corporate ladder. Lars Ulrich is fighting against the wrong people. If he really wanted to protect the interests of artists, he should look to defend himself against the mighty Recording Industry Association of America.

Rock scribe Dave Marsh reported that last November the 1976 Copyright Act was quietly amended, and the redefinition of sound recordings was forever changed by the time the offices were locked. Under the firm command of RIAA's Executive Director, Hilary Rosen, Mr. Mitch Glazier authored the amended Copyright Act, which now sadly reads "works for hire." This blatantly violates Congress' copyright reform act, which clearly stated that "works for hire" did NOT include sound recordings! This amendment is another example of how the RIAA tries to screw dedicated artists, with no regard for their creativity and passion for music. Rosen noted that "The recording

itself is always going to be owned by the record companies." Mr. Glazier's estimated reward for penning the work-for-hire amendment was \$500,000, plus annual perks to further gratify his ego. I would wholly reject his post-facto justification that he was "just following orders", or something to that effect. History has not been kind in judging the masses of brainwashed people who blithely violated people's rights because they were "just following orders."

If this amendment proves to be damaging to artists then Representative Howard Coble (Republican-North Carolina) will litigate the newly-inserted amendment, but can we be certain that he will follow up on his promise to go "back to the drawing board?" The RIAA should approach Congress and schedule a fair hearing to debate this important issue, not hide behind job titles and re-write pertinent documents behind closed doors!

Former Copyright Office staffer Mr. Jay Rosenthal (now an attorney with the D.C. Berliner, Corcoran & Rowe firm) denounced the work-for-hire amendment in Timothy White's "Music To My Ears" column: "This is a classic Washington legislative theft...It's another attempt to get artists in a submissive hold and turn them into 'employees'."

The RIAA's devious Executive Director, Hilary Rosen, drafted an angry rebuttal to Dave Marsh on Jan. 31st: "Your article on work for hire was so mean. Why? I don't expect you to actually call us to get our side before you write things, but you are so personal. I don't like it and I don't deserve it. Most people say I should just ignore you and not pretend that it gets to

the true enemy?

by Jeff Alexander

me. Screw that." In all too many instances, the pop media pays lip service to, and kisses the asses, of prominent corporate interests. Marsh was properly informing the public of yet another example of the RIAA's deceitful behavior. Marsh replied by asking Rosen to identify the personal sentence in question, and said that if it proved to be inappropriate he would withdraw it. Rosen never responded. Silence implies acceptance. Mr. Glazier now lobbies for the RIAA, so all the pieces fit together. At one point the RIAA spent an eye popping \$820,000 on direct lobbying to push forward their one-sided ideas. The RIAA has also previously contributed to right-wing politicians, perhaps in an attempt to buy their silence.

The works for hire controversy obviously wasn't well received by the artists. Negotiations have been taking place between the RIAA and Mr. Jay Cooper (of the Manatt, Phelps, & Phillips firm). Mr. Cooper is currently representing the artists. How naive does the RIAA think the artists are? It was just a matter of time before their underhanded attempt to further exploit artists would be challenged. In the RIAA's August 8th press release, it was announced that a resolution was reached regarding the highly controversial work-for-hire amendment. "The book needs to be closed on this issue so we can get back to a united industry on so many important challenges of the day. The resolution is a good one," said Executive Director Rosen.

I beg to differ. If this resolution is in fact a "good one", then why hasn't the RIAA taken the liberty of printing it in their press release? Why is Rosen so quick to close the book on this issue? I don't believe

that such a controversial issue can be quickly resolved, and I continue to distrust the RIAA. Many of us continue to believe that the RIAA is composed primarily of deceitful, money-hungry ladder climbers, but Lars Ulrich seems to think otherwise. "I am not pro-record company at all, but people are fantasizing if they think that unsigned bands can take their music to the public in any major way without record-industry backing," said Ulrich. Such a statement blatantly contradicts Ulrich's own efforts against Napster. In one breath he makes his views clear about not being entirely for record labels, but then argues that without them poor little Metallica wouldn't be able to get its music to the masses, thereby hoping to manufacture sympathy for his crusade against Napster, a crusade which is ultimately against music fans themselves.

If Metallica had any genuine dedication to their music as an art form, they would start their own record label to prevent future mishaps, such as the leaking of demos. Instead, Ulrich entirely dismisses DIY ethics. I'm not calling for sympathy toward major label artists. An artist, like any other individual, must defend their own ideals and endeavors in this callous world, and those who suffer after failing to do so shouldn't seek to blame scapegoats. Ulrich jumped to conclusions and fingered Napster users, blaming them for the leaking of the demos of "I Disappear." In the final analysis, it's every artist's job to make certain that their creative efforts are protected.

When Ulrich said that "somewhere in the chain of things it was leaked", he should've made an angry visit to his band's own record label instead of walking up the

courtroom steps with a list of over 300,000 Napster personal user ID's of individuals that he claimed had "stolen" Metallica's songs. It's funny that reporters have not received a straight answer about how Metallica managed to compile this list of personal user ID's. After all, maybe certain people's Internet privacy rights had been violated. Lars Ulrich personally handed over those user ID's to his lawyers, in the name of acting as a crusader for artists' rights. If Mr. Ulrich was truly a crusader he would have rallied his fellow artists and urged them to boycott and perhaps even sue the Recording Industry Association of America for robbing artists of the right to control their own destinies by surreptitiously amending the 1976 Copyright Act. The real "enemy" in this controversy is the RIAA and the greedy major label artists who willingly collaborate with that organization.

Prior to the introduction of the recordable blank tape, the RIAA attempted to mislead the public into believing that such technology would be detrimental to the artists. The RIAA claimed that such technological advances would result in massive illegal bootlegging and corresponding profit loss. Such a statement turned out to be absurd. Instead, the introduction of the recordable tape has propelled bands into the spotlight and delighted music lovers, who were thence able to dub copies of their favorite albums for each other. By engaging in activities such as making mix tapes, they made it possible for many bands to achieve virtually cost-free exposure. In other words, it was the fans themselves who helped make these bands famous by exploiting this new technology.

The RIAA only raised its eyebrows over the issue because it feared its own loss of profits, and because of this fear a Supreme Court ruling became the sole determining factor with regards to recordable VCR and cassette tapes. Based on the logic of Lars Ulrich and the RIAA, every one of us should be subpoenaed for making ourselves mix tapes!

Ulrich promoted his Napster lawsuit under the guise of Copyright and Artist Protection, but what lurks behind those powerful words is "We Seek Retribution For Profit Losses." Only when the RIAA faces possible profit loss do they object. How can we trust the same industry that turned over and let Tipper Gore and her Parents Music Resource Center fuck them like a dog in heat when the issue of the Parental Advisory stickers ensued? Because of the RIAA's passivity the Parental Advisory stickers are still used today by would-be censors to restrict so-called "obscene" music by means of oppressive legislation.

Some other artists fortunately have a more enlightened view about Napster. Singer Neil Young offered his two cents by saying "It's great. Whatever gets the music around. [The record labels] will worry about that, and I'll worry about the music." Public Enemy's Chuck D. also appeared to be very supportive of Napster, arguing that it was "the most exciting thing since rap, disco and the Beatles." Lars Ulrich and his naysayers appear to be a bunch of Luddites who foolishly believe that they can stop technological progress. If a brand new medium is benefitting fans and exposing the creativity of artists, including obscure artists, then why destroy it? Alas, fellow artist/producer Dr. Dre has filed suit, following in the footsteps of Ulrich. Dr. Dre has even gone so far as to claim that Napster stole food from his children's' mouths! Should we all pity a man whose wardrobe probably costs more than nearly anything that we own? Gimme a break! I can't stand self-pitying celebrities. I think it's fair to assume that for every sale that Dr. Dre claims he is losing because of Napster, he will easily be able to recover his supposed losses of profit. Have any of you checked the ticket prices for the recent Up In Smoke tour?

Lars Ulrich made his anti-Napster stance public as well as taking it to the courtroom, and a much anticipated debate with Public Enemy frontman Chuck D. took place on PBS' Charlie Rose show. Confronting Ulrich, Mr. Rose turned up the pressure, "What is it about this, gimme the essence, why this is for you such a bad thing that you want to stop it?" Ulrich's



"I am not pro-record company at all, if they think that unsigned bands public in any major way without

response? "In essence it's about control. It's about controlling what you own." I found myself agreeing wholeheartedly with Public Enemy's Chuck D instead, since he clearly prepared himself before the debate. "I think the degree of artistry over the last fifty to sixty years has proven that the music business has been the one in control of an artist's destiny, throwing them in and throwing them out, and right now this war goes beyond their heads. This is like the power goes back to the people. 'Cuz the industry over the past fifty to sixty years has been accountant- and lawyer-driven, and it hasn't been about the artistry," retorted Chuck D.

Lars Ulrich's reasoning behind the Napster lawsuit was to recover Metallica's profit losses and protect copyrighted works. I understand that Ulrich fears that he has no say over his music, but what should one expect when major labels constantly use artists as puppets with the sole intent of making themselves millionaires? If Ulrich truly felt that Metallica's artistic purity was being stomped upon, then perhaps it's time for Metallica to sever all ties to their label. Metallica's upcoming tour will cost \$65 dollars a ticket, and I believe this excessive price is intended to cover the costs of their Napster lawsuit. Even the most dedicated fan will have to fork out a sizeable chunk of their paycheck to attend the show, and if they're unlucky they might only be able to hear Metallica from the nosebleed section of the arena.

So far Congress has sat back and merely watched the angry debates, like TV

wrestling fans who enjoy the bloody action but do not wish to participate in it directly. On July 11th, Congress finally stepped up to ringside. Senator Orrin G. Hatch (Republican-Utah), chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, noted that "Fair and reasonable licensing needs to take place, that is what I'm hearing." The RIAA was present, acting like a tag team partner waiting to inflict the coup de grace. The RIAA argued that Napster allows users to steal copyrighted material, but in his defense Napster CEO Hank Barry said that "Every time a new technology makes it easier for listeners to discover, enjoy and share music, the recording and music publishing industry ends up benefiting." In Ulrich's statement before the committee, he responded as follows: "How can we embrace a new format and sell our music for a fair price when someone, with a few lines of code and no investment costs, creative input, or marketing expenses, simply gives it away?" The flaw in this argument lies in the notion of selling music "for a fair price," since new music hasn't been sold for a fair price in years. Forcing a dedicated fan to pay \$19.99 for a CD that costs 2 dollars to produce can hardly be considered fair. Senator Orrin Hatch's statement was surprisingly objective: "Our copyright laws must play a role- a strong role- in protecting creative works'over the Internet. These protections, however, must be secured in a manner which is mindful of the impact related regulation can have on the free flow of ideas that a decentralized, open network like the Internet creates."



**but people are fantasizing
can take their music to the
record-industry backing,**

I believe Hatch is calling for regulation, but under no circumstance does he call for bringing about the downfall of Napster and altering the free flow of ideas. This is in marked contrast to Ulrich, who has been hitting Napster as hard as he pounds the drums for Metallica. Napster CEO Hank Barry summed up by saying that "Technological advances like the radio, the cassette recorder, cable television and the VCR have survived copyright holders' attacks and, in the end, proved to be a financial boon to these same concerned copyright holders."

Every new advance has been met by naysayers. We must work together to achieve common ground with technology, not attempt to bring about its demise because we don't approve of its effects. Artists should take the initiative and decide if they want their music to appear on Napster, but just because one influential artist requests that his band's material not be made available to Napster doesn't give him the right to prevent other artists from exploiting the many advantages it may offer them, or to interfere with the privacy of online downloaders.

As Senator Patrick Leahy (Democrat-Vermont) noted, "History has shown that when new technologies emerge, they may initially seem to threaten to trump intellectual property protection, but in the end things get sorted out." In this case things may not be sorted out for years. Once the dust settles, Metallica may find themselves desperately seeking to repair the bridge they created between them and their

fans. Meanwhile, the RIAA will continue to laugh all the way to the bank, without giving a damn about the fans or the artists. I hope Lars Ulrich and the RIAA continue to get shit from everyone whose toes they have stepped on after the intensity of this self-righteous but selfish crusade fades away, just like it has in Metallica's own music.

Judge Patel's landmark injunction against Napster will not be quickly forgotten, as Napster CEO Hank Barry vowed to appeal this federal court order: "We intend to see this through in every venue, in every court." Barry immediately followed up on his promise by interrupting the victory toasting of the RIAA and Metallica's Ulrich. The RIAA's Rosen may have believed that this headache would be quickly relieved, but Napster's surprising July 28th appeals court victory will certainly leave Rosen with some ringing in her ears until a trial is scheduled. Two federal appeals courts have granted Napster a surprising stay, thereby allowing Shawn Fanning's original dorm room project to remain online pending trial. "I am happy and grateful that we do not have to turn away our 20 million users and that we can continue to help artists," commented Fanning. Rosen continued with her whining: "It is frustrating, of course, that the tens of millions of daily infringements occurring on Napster will be able to continue, at least temporarily."

To me, what's really frustrating is that the RIAA and countless other heartless corporations are continuing to abuse their power solely to make money. And so the

barrage of litigation continues, as onlookers choose sides in the ongoing battle between the RIAA and Napster. I urge the courts to carefully consider each and every decision, because one careless affirmation will most certainly have an adverse effect on the free flow of information that the Internet makes possible and facilitates.

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Bad Obsessions

1. Nobody said it was easy

"It's dirty, it's a pity, and time ain't exactly on our side..."

Back in my early twenties, which sure didn't feel like my glory days, I wrote jive columns and crime reports for detective magazines. It was a simple relationship — they'd pay me 165 bucks per column, and I would lie and make shit up to meet the deadlines. Nobody ever noticed, but then only gun freaks and the mentally ill read those magazines.

Years later, I was writing for a semi-hip film magazine and, facing looming deadlines, I began writing reviews for movies that didn't even exist. It was at that point that that I became sickened and horrified with the whole notion of writing, professionally or

SLEAZEGRINDER

otherwise. Writers are the worst kind of treacherous, bottom-feeding whores, and "journalists" are even one rung lower, if that's possible.

So I put down the pen, picked up the bottle, and forgot the whole thing.

10 years later, and some propulsive influences have been poking at torured psyche, requesting that I lay down my gospel of hard redemption through harder rock. I swore I'd never do this again, unless I wrote about something that directly affected me. And the only things that affect me are rocknroll and bad luck.

Welcome to my world, It's a socio-psychotic state of bliss...

2. Rockin' is my business

"The book of rocknroll? Motherfucker, I wrote it."

An Open letter to Jeff Bale, rock'n'roll burnout:

It's only because I love *Hit List* so much that I wish to destroy it, Jeff. Or at least it's current profane theologies of what constitutes rock in it's primal form. When's IRON BOSS gonna bust through that door, welding torches and balls in hand? Where's the tales of ragged glory from true road dogs like FU MANCHU and ALABAMA THUNDERPUSSY? And

speaking of pussy, what's with the emo-core? Crazy, *Hit List* overlooked the HARDCORE SUPERSTAR record, but Jeff, I suggest you take a look at the shot of these Swedish Fireballs on the back of the album, and ponder for a second just what these cats are capable of. Can you hear the total rock chaos, see the bruises, feel the endless nights of no sleep on the road to ruin? I mean, can you dig it?

Do the same for a JETS TO BRAZIL or GET-UP KIDS record, and say to yourself, do I really want to emulate a life of character assassinating my roommates, working at a record store, drinking cheap beer, and playing Sega?

Time to draw some lines in the sand, I think. And while your at it, could you flush out the skinheads? "Street rock" is nothing but 'Oi' without the conviction to publicly display the same trite, paranoid politics and neanderthal tactics that the skins have always chased their own tails with. And the ponderous music still sounds like AC/DC with Down's Syndrome. Believe me, the BLACK HALOS and the DROPKICK MURPHYS have nothing in common. I'm pretty sure the Halos have no intention of ever working another day in their lives, never mind writing goddamn anthems about it.

So let us rip and tear, Mr. Bale, so that we may build a new world on the broken bones of our slain enemies, a world that runs on holy gasoline, a world where full tilt is the only speed. After all, we will leave ugly skulls when we go. Surely, children will piss on them and laugh, not knowing the noble rock warriors that once possessed them. But someday, they will be sought out be the true believers; dug up, washed off, chromed, and bolted to the hoods of Bad Ass hot rods, and they will be exalted as fucking religious symbols. And as generations pass they'll speak of the Rogue's gallery that haunted *Hit List* magazine...Bale, Monroe, Slug, Thee Rebel...."they were psychic vampires, emotional cripples, and spiritual beggars, but Goddamnit, they knew how to ROCK LIKE FUCK."

Until that day, Jeff, there is still much work left do. We cannot protect the sweaty palace of rock with dead soldiers at the gate, so sweep out the traitors and plug in the Marshalls, because the revolution is DOWN TO KILL. Viva!

3. Tired Wings

"Can count my friends on these 4 fingers, who could ask for more?"

I was sitting on the steps of the Statehouse, observing the cultural miasma, when I got a desperate phoncall from my old tight bro, Action Dave. I heard the owl call his name, so to speak, months ago, and last reports had him holed up at his mom's house in the suburbs, locked in his old

room with a gun and a bottle, twisting on the Devil's fork.

He was suicidal and speeding to oblivion. The focused slur in his voice, ragged with phlegm and misery, told me that he was just drunk enough to do whatever crazy shit was rattling around in his ruined head. It was the samepathetic state that MURDER CITY DEVILS songs are written in. "But before I go, man I want you to hear this song, and you better listen, cuz I ain't leaving no note...if anybody asks, this is what it

**When's IRON BOSS
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and balls in hand?**

was all about." Now, if Dave were a little more culturally savvy, maybe a little KARMA TO BURN would flare up, y'know, "All my friends are alcoholics, temptations drip from their eyes..." making this a more profound story, but he's not. He's a hick.

The first heads down, full-tilt boogie strains of a SKYNRD song crank up in the background. "Action, my man!" I'm shouting, "This is hardly the time for Southern Rock!" But he's not having it. "You listen, you fucker, cuz it's the last time you're gonna hear it! From me, anyway!" I hear his mad dog howl of rebel Karaoke — "Seven years of bad luck, comin down on me..."

What could I do? I hung up on him. 2 days later, he called me from rehab, looking for smokes. Obviously, that redneck shit saved his life. Artimus Pyle, we salute you.

4. Can't Stop Rockin'

"I'm too tired to think, and I'm too poor to eat."

TUULI are obviously too cute to rock. Someday, somebody's gonna have to call SYMPATHY FOR THE RECORD INDUSTRY on their relentless pursuit of jailbait shtick as rock sensation. Besides the chancy lateral move of sleeping with those glam pussy turncoats LIBERTINE, an alliance that will surely breed no lunatic Gods, these babysitters on Ecstasy with cotton candy colored hair churn out that sort of stupid/clever hooky hard pop that only has cachet on snarky college radio stations. At least L7, TUULI's spiritual, wizened older sisters, have the good taste to be uglier.

I'm not saying they suck, I'm saying they don't rock, and I don't feel 19 again. Besides, there are no rocknroll people here tonight...where's all the porkchop sideburns, Supersuckers t-shirts, and scowls? I can't operate like this, man!

I decide to call my favorite drunk punk, Sean, last seen a few hours ago, stumbling around the parking lot at work with a 5 foot-long yellow python around his neck. "I got it from this homeless junkie chick that was sleeping on my couch", he told me. "She split, and left it in the sink. Her name's Lucy. The snake, I mean." "I'm taking her over to the supermarket" he says, to find out what she likes to eat. You wanna come?" This sounds like a barrel of monkeys, it really does, but I gotta decline. "Pythons like to eat children", I tell him. "You'll find plenty of them there." That's Sean in a nutshell, man: "smart enough to know he's fucked, but dumb enough to believe in luck." He would know where the rock was on this impossibly hotn'humid friday night. I dial up his number. He's got the good sense to keep a rich girlfriend with a cell phone. The connection clicks onto an ungodly racket. Well, alright. We shout directions and events at one another and a half hour later, I find myself back in the quintessential Boston rocknroll womb, downstairs at the Middle East, engulfed in the hard rock equivalent of Saigon '71 — a full-blown death metal show. Now, this is what I call ROCK.

All the trappings of excessive rocknroll stupidity are on display — corpsepaint, dorks from Florida with Flying V's, Satan. The ever-fetching promise of bathtubs full of drunken metal chicks will, of course, not come true this night, but at least we got a guy on stage with a head in a bucket. Maybe it's a real one — lots of death metal guys are ex- Mexican

drug lords, I hear. But the point of the head and the blood and the yelling is that this is what this particular band, DECEASED, do to "Metal Posers". The irony of it all is that this is exactly the same splatter gag that Blackie Lawless used to pull off in the early 80's salad days of his buzzsaw blade, crotched horrrorglam band W.A.S.P., whose acronym, to the kids on the street, always stood for "We Are Stupid Posers". See the beauty in that? The beat goes on, and it just gets faster and dumber along the way.

5. Wanted Man

I've got this friend, let's be literal and call him the Millionaire. When we were 14, he was a proto-dreadlocked punk who stagedived like a Kamikaze pilot. At 30, he has a hundred dollar haircut, a spooky briefcase, an actual pilot's license, and a continued disregard for personal safety. All the favors he asked of me were increasingly shady, and I knew, despite his claims of legitimacy, that it was all a drug opera; but the cat taught me how to ride a motorcycle, so I owed him.

So there we were, in Chinatown, waiting for the flashing headlight signal that meant it was cool for the millionaire to go into the Liberty adult bookstore and hand off a bunch of "imported watches". He wanted me to come along as a witness, because he thought these particular jewelry dealers were in a Chinese Triad. Which meant that I ended up in a dark hallway, chainsmoking with a bored, tired looking stripper. "Busy?" I mean, what else was I gonna say? "Wicked", she says. "Howcum every guy that comes in here wants to see

...she says. "Howcum every guy that comes in here wants to see me shove something up my ass?" I don't have an answer to that, man, but luckily I notice she's got the rose tattoo from the CULT's "Love Removal Machine" single on her thigh, so we change subjects and talk rock.

me shove something up my ass?" I don't have an answer to that, man, but luckily I notice she's got the rose tattoo from the CULT's "Love Removal Machine" single on her thigh, so we change subjects and talk rock. As you'd expect, most of the strippers preferred 80's metal and C&C Music factory shit to dance to, but this chick's favorites were the BLACK CROWES, ROB ZOMBIE, and SOCIAL DISTORTION. "'Prison Bound' is the best one," she tells me. It's sexy and it's easy to dance to, but the lyrics are cool as shit, too. That outlaw stuff is pretty right on." Finally, a recommendation you can trust. 6 months later, and the millionaire is in Italy, where all scoundrels end up eventually.

And it continues to bemuse me when I see the latest gang of 20 year old rebels that ink deals with painfully hip record labels like JUNK, who really believe that putting on a cowboy hat will bring them any closer to MIKE NESS's hard won street cred. I doubt that Miss Bump and Grind rock chick down at the Liberty is gonna be shaking her money maker to the CHEMO KIDS anytime soon.

6. Let it Rock

"Ya kiddin' me, man, well we don't care, half a year from now, we'll all be millionaires...."

Everytime the subsonic murmurings of "rock is dead" start bubbling

to the surface, some gang of lethal BadAsses show up squash the vicious rumors. The most likely current contenders? The pride of Mt. Washington, New Hampshire, SCISSORFIGHT. Armed with the brilliant motto, "It's not rock until you piss your pants", a full cadre of stunning high octane songs, and the monolithic enigma that is their burly, bald, bearded singer, Mr. Ironlung, this is the most inexplicable rock riot I've ever seen.

The cold, clanging, digitized sound of the nü metal that's all the rage is a lot like those barbed wire bracelets that the Goth kids love to wear; sure, they look like they could take your eye out, but they're essentially harmless. Hello, Slipknot. Consider SCISSORFIGHT the exact opposite. When this tax-evading, ragtag gang of magnificent bastards lay down their revolutionary screed in a town near you, you'd be wise to join the faithful, because there's just no way that you can take 4 half-crazy, all wired hog slaughterers and commercial fishermen from the wilds of the last rebel state, hand them a gurgling cauldron of sonic goo filled with hardcore punk, Sabbath, redneck shit, and black metal, and have it explode out of both barrels as such swaggering, menacing, king hell power rawknroll without the divine grace of God and America. There's just no way. And hell, if that's not incentive enough, they got their name from the porn movie term for a lesbian scene.

7. Hot Head

"All I really wanted, was a chance at a brand new day; you got the keys to my house and my heart, but you ain't got the keys to my Chevrolet..."

You can stuff a gorgeous, chesty, 25 year old co-ed into a pink ROCK CITY CRIMEWAVE t-shirt, but you can't make her rock. Running off to the Netherlands with some goateed Satanist would've been OK, but a weekend in Florida with some Palm-V toting, bespectacled scarecrow of a man is just insulting. But it turns out I wasn't pissed off enough to challenge the erstwhile bodythief to a duel at high noon, which is too bad, 'cuz I bet he holds his gun like a girl; nor was I heartbroken enough to wallow in my misery with a cup of dirty water and a MARK LANEGAN solo record.

I think that's why no-one listens to T-REX or DRAMARAMA or MOTHER LOVE BONE or SOUL ASYLUM anymore, and why AXL is so afraid to leave the house and face the angry mob — here in the digital age, the contrivances of unbridled passion and romantic longing are more like charming nostalgia, like Ford Broncos and purple Microdot, than any sort of motivating force in the modern world. Turns out it's love that's dead, not rock. Oh, well. Jesus wept, motherfucker.

8. Moonshine

"Sometimes you just can't tell, which way's heaven, which way's hell, Being American can get real hard."

So it's around 9:30 on a Saturday night, and I'm at Tower records reading a Tattoo magazine and waiting for the Demon Cleaner to show up so we can get down on our thing. Rasta Nick sneaks up behind me, and with typical false security guard humor, tells me to empty my pockets. That bit never gets old, does it? Lately, dealing with Nick is like talking suction cups to a mortician. Everybody else I know wants to out-motherfucker the Man, but this straight-on dude is sitting in the Man's vest pocket. Rasta Nick, the pop cop. It makes for a queasy kind of love. But I'm game for trading tales of boozing and pranks with him tonight, always hoping that somewhere in his Rob Zombie-as-sponsored-by-Jah reptile brain, some kind of "sinking a worm into the Devil's apple" scenario has gotta be brewing.

Just in time to trip the high tension wire, in slithers the Gov, a great and wasted friend of mine. Too much junkie business. I know heroin kills, but sometimes it takes an obscene amount of time getting around to it. Here was a cat who, back in our college days, wore a red leather jacket and a Lou Reed countenance that wouldn't quit; always had a copy of Jim Carroll's "Catholic Boy" on deck in his car, and who would routinely drag me all the way to Long Island on midnight runs to the Amityville house, to drink German beer and soak up the evil atmosphere. Dead cool, y'know? Now just mostly dead. Gaunt, skeletal, shaking, sweating, gray, hollow, lost, gone. Keep glorifying those needles, rock star kids.

Gov's here to steal some Britney Spears CD's for his next bag. I know he's on parole, and is too sick to take jail real well. And I know Nick's about to spot him. Same old song and dance, my friend. Somewhere between brotherhood and contempt lies pity, so I attempt a distraction. "Hey, Mr. Super-ego", I say to Nick, "Let's go out for a smoke. There's too many fuckers on the street, maybe you can shake a few down." It feels good to be out of the neon yellow no-funhouse, but I really just want to disappear from this scene completely. This is the dark side of the lifestyle — dead, jail, or rocknroll. And it ain't hip to sink this low. So I'm ranting and raving about whatever, Danzig records I think, and keeping one eye on Nick and the other on the front door. After a fashion, but not a moment too soon, Demon Cleaner's rock star car screeches around the

corner. To hell with it. Nick gives me a knowing "Good lookin' out" as I split. "Yeh, well, the dude let me sleep in the backseat of his Rabbit for three weeks once", I tell him. "Yeh, well, I'm still gonna have him arrested." And he did. Mr. Lucky, you ain't nothing to a dog or a truck or a fist or the law...

9. Homesick Blues

"Looking for a new life, now that the old one's gone."

I recently gave a final vomit wet kiss to Hipster City USA, Cambridge, Massachusetts, after 27 years of rubbing my nose in it, and crossed the pond over to the state's capital. I said a long overdue goodbye to the \$15,000 a year rents, the streets clogged with Euro-trash and college dorks and the uptown slaughter junkie "everybody in leather" contingent, and the endless screech and clatter of everybody trying to make the scene all at once.

Keeping my existence lean, I took a \$300-a-month furnished room in the basement of a rooming house around the corner from the Golden domes of the statehouse and straight out of "Eraserhead", complete with

***Motor stoner, cosmic doom, riff
rawk - call it what you like, but
there's a virtual army of blissed out,
long haired, rattlesnake blood-
drinking buzzlords out there...***

hissing steam pipes, clanging metal doors with giant throw bolts, and walls slathered with 17 coats of egg-shell white. Now, there's something undeniably rock about shaving, making coffee, and passing out all in the same room, and the Kafka-esque urban isolation (my only discernable neighbor is the late night shredder across the courtyard, hammering out Megadeth riffs at 2 AM) lends a considerable amount of terrorist chic. But the day-to-day travails of rooming house living definitely tend toward the surreal.

On my first night there, while attempting to hang the ubiquitous ZODIAC MINDWARP poster that marks my territory, I accidentally tore the sink out of the wall, staring slackjawed at my incredulous neighbor through the giant hole in the wall I'd just made. Just two nights ago, a drowning suicide on the fifth floor begat a jarring, just before dawn wake-up call — the violent whining sound of the fire alarm, followed quickly by the starfish-shaped sprinklers showering all of us and all of our stuff with some goeey orange liquid that might have been water, once.

But it's stepping out into a dead city after dark that really illuminates the brilliance of my geographical cure. Rats in battalions are ruling the street scene, brazenly carpeting the sidewalks, defying natural order. Your only other travelling companions are ghosts and lost dogs and the occasional ambulance, whirring by in a panicked howl. If the cops do show up, you'd better have your "I'm not here to sell drugs, I'm here to buy pornography" banter down cold, because everybody's a suspicious character when nobody's around. Goddamn, I love living in the city.

10. (Feels Like) '75 Again
"Does it ever end? No way."

Motor stoner, cosmic doom, riff rawk — call it what you like, but there's a virtual army of blissed out, long haired, rattlesnake blood-drinking buzzlords out there, whose sworn duty is to erase the damage done to 70's rocknroll by Peter Frampton, disco, and ultimately, the Sex Pistols.

You remember the 70's. It was the decade when the GREATEST rock bands of all time were at the height of their powers: STOOGES, NEW YORK DOLLS, MC5, BLACK SABBATH, ALICE COOPER, T-REX, THIN LIZZY, fuckin' AC/DC — and ended with arena rock, "Saturday Night Fever", Johnny Rotten in a "Pink Floyd Sucks" t-shirt, and Billy Idol smashing Marc Bolan's guitar. But what if nobody dropped the ball? What if we lived in a world of dune buggys, not SUV's? Where Sabbath never fired Ozzy? Where Alice never sobered up? Where terry-cloth tube tops, mirrored shades, and handlebar mustaches never went out of style? Where punk rock never happened? Sounds heavy, right? Well, it is, Jack. Dust clouds of feedback choke through mountainous walls of deep fried slabbage, as Satanic supermen wail and moan their crazy odes to the motherfucker goddess. And irony, for once, is just not necessary. So kiss the tail of the scorpion, baby, and succumb to the REAL "return of the rock" — FU MANCHU, NEBULA,

UNIDA, SHEAVY, ROACHPOWDER, MILLIGRAM, fuckin' ROADSAB — this is the sound of New Kings reclaiming lost kingdoms.

11. Lookin' For Trouble

"Lookin' for a piece of ass, lookin' for a cheeseburger..."

I walked into Burger King the other day, and heard a muzak version of an ALICE IN CHAINS song being pumped through the sound system. I didn't freak out, man, I just went about my business and pretended that nothin' was wrong. Someday, IGGY POP's gonna be on TV, drinking tea, and selling life insurance. Luckily, we'll all be dead by then.

12. I Need A Thrill/Something Good

In case the inference was lost on some of our younger readers, this column was created under the heady influence of the '91 debut album, "Nobody Said It Was Easy", by the FOUR HORSEMEN, a band that was WAY more authentic, true blue, American rocknroll than whoever's on the cover of this issue. CAVEAT EMPTOR: BAD OBSESSIONS is simply the ongoing pilgrim's progress of a rogue male with nothin' left but his balls and his word. It's not so much an imperious urge for brutal truth-telling as it is the fact that a psychic on TV told me I'd be murdered by some dude in a TIKI-themed bowling shirt and flame Creepers, and I'm just trying to speed up the process. I have no hard-on for controversy, it's just that at this late and desperate hour, I can no longer afford to mollify the mentally, spiritually, and musically infirm.

Truth be told, as much as I love the free-balling, loose cannon, "Tesco Vee might show up later" vibe of *Hit List*, aside from the dudes I mentioned earlier, I wouldn't attend a funeral with most *Hit List* staffers. I just can't see myself dancing with a cat like Jeff Jarema, who, at 37, has already become grandfatherly and doddering, shuffling from garage sale to swap meet, buying dusty records for his Goddamn jukebox, and urging his readers with an actual lifestyle to come home and complaining about their being "subsidized by [their] mother". What a blowhard. And anyway,

Jeff, I can think of at least a couple of us with restraining orders preventing us from that kind of scene.

I forgot to tart up first column credentials, but all you really need to know is that I've got my name in a secret Bible. Anybody lookin' to channel heavy sounds, or if you'd like me to yawn off your idle threats, you can reach me at Kenzilla69@hotmail.com. You can also find me ruining *Burntout Recluse* (Dimitri@choice.net) with my headbanger shit, and blanketing Young Miz Amy's *Screech* magazine (www.screechmagazine.com) with my filth. Rocks off is rocks off. ♣

Dust clouds of feedback choke through mountainous walls of deep fried slabbage, as Satanic supermen wail and moan their crazy odes to the motherfucker goddess.

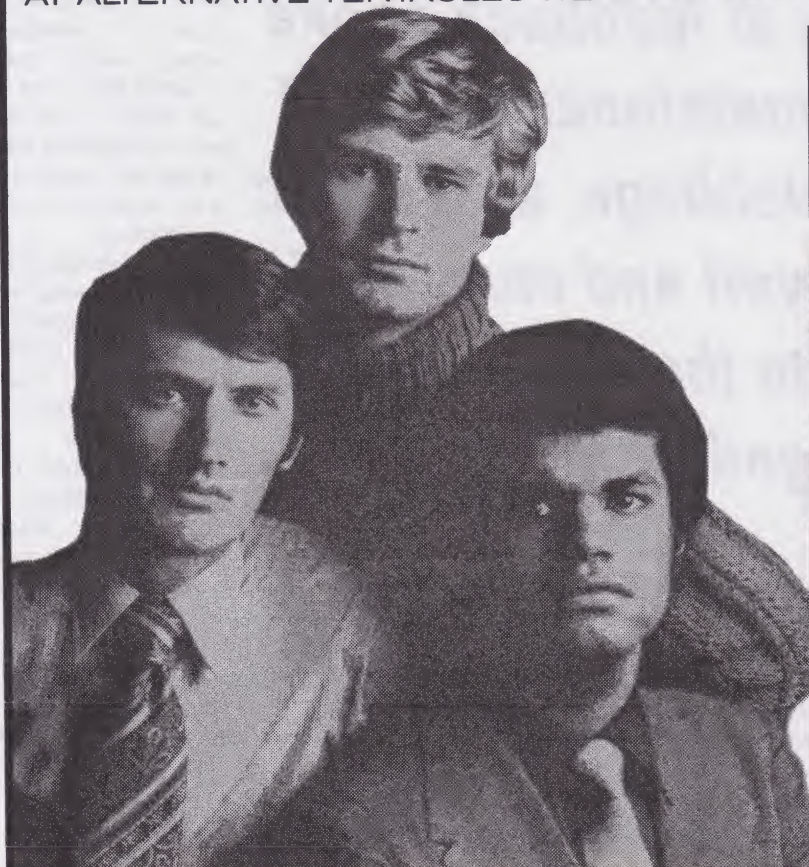
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ON MP3S, CD-Rs, THE GLUT OF LPs, AND THE EVER-CHANGING IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES ON THE DISTRIBUTION AND ENJOYMENT OF MUSIC

We are on the cusp of the biggest technological revolution in the music industry in over 100 years. It already seems certain that this new decade will be the third biggest period of such change ever. (The first was when songs came to be sold in large quantities, via sheet music; the second was the invention of recording.) Some of the impending changes I welcome. Some of them I do not, and though they are inevitable I can already see some babies being thrown out with the bathwater. In any case, I can think of no greater topic for music fans, who will both benefit and lose from the shape of things to come.

How music will soon be written, recorded, and sold is about to make the system of the last century seem prehistoric. Nevertheless, many have yet to consider that this powerful change will shake the industry to its foundations. Others merely remind us, sensibly, that music will always be with us, so don't worry too much about it. But technology will change what you buy and how you buy it. And as we await the coming squall, it is illuminating to consider the history of previous shocks on music commerce, and their impact on the way we have experienced music.

As I am often fond of pointing out, the phenomenon of "recorded music" is barely over a century old. An elderly woman once recalled for me the first time she encountered, as a young girl in the last 100s, the strange contraption that would play a song without an actual musician present. (I can't remember if she specified if it was a cylinder player, Thomas Edison's original invention, or the newer format, the phonograph record, which would remain the industry standard for 80 years.) This invention, so recent in humanity's cultural development, has among other things enabled us to hear music made by those long dead before our births, a privilege obviously not enjoyed by this woman or her antecedents. In her parents' youth, one had to make do with just the songs themselves, via sheet music, sung or played live.

Think of it this way: every album prior to Edison was a live album, whether by a few friends or relatives having some fun (the punk rock and indie pop of the 19th century!), or by a royal symphony orchestra. A chart hit in 1870 meant you sold the most sheet music that year for folks to stand around the piano to sing. Take the famed songwriter Stephen Foster. Most of us know his tunes, "Old Folks at Home" and "Swanee River." So did the people of his time, via their own renditions. Those "old folks at home" still singing Foster's songs between his death in 1864 and Edison's breakthrough can be thought of as the 19th century equivalent of the oldies radio format. Foster's writing has proved enduring, just as it is easy to imagine people still singing The Beatles' "Yesterday" or some Kinks or Clash tune 150 years from now. The only difference is that we will never know what Foster sounded like singing his own work. (Kind of like how few people have heard Burt Bacharach's versions of his own hit songs. But hey, you're much better off with Dionne Warwick and Dusty Springfield's versions, or better yet the Stranglers' vicious cover of "Walk on By" anyway!)

But sheet music had not been prevalent for very long before Edison, particularly compared to the distribution of the written word. One can read or see a terrific Aristophanes play performed, such as "The Birds,"

but we can only guess at what melodies the comic playwright favored by the local punk lute player in Athens in the fifth century, B.C. We do know some medieval songs, such as "Greensleeves," which were hand-copied by monks. But if music has been a part of human culture since we first evolved from primates, the mass production of music did not flourish until sheet music became widely available. Here is another reason to concur with recent polls that placed Johann Gutenberg's 15th Century invention of movable type as the most important technological achievement of the second millennium. We all appreciate the printing press' importance to the dissemination of information and learning. One might also credit the German inventor with first allowing the scattered masses to hear or play the same music - the beginnings



of a global culture. The great 18th Century composers such as Mozart and Handel may have written on commission for wealthy patrons (even the occasional popular opera for ordinary citizens), but the sale of their sheet music, made possible by Gutenberg, made them immortal to the masses. Thus, the introduction of mass-printed sheet music was the true creation of music as an industry, right on schedule for the 19th Century Industrial Revolution.

The point is simple. Technology has always had an immense impact on the distribution of music. Every advance has meant drastic changes in the way songs have reached the common music fan, stretching back over 600 years - not just since the introduction of the compact disc in the 1980s, when the superior format of vinyl regrettably, finally lost its front-runner status (having previously beaten off heated challenges from 8-track cartridges and cassettes). And just as a fervent segment of music enthusiasts still views the CD as devolution of the highest order, despite its ease and convenience (and smaller storage demands, whew!), some of these technological transformations over hundreds of years have had well-reasoned detractors. In most cases, for every gain, something else important has been lost, and that which is lost is usually unknown to future generations (which might be their loss!).

Take recordings themselves, much as we love them (you'll find scads of them in the back of every issue of *Hit List*, after all). One of the truly sad consequences of the capturing of sound waves frequencies for instant replay is that it has indirectly caused millions of people to forego the heretofore fundamental pleasure of singing together. How many of you reading this now, let alone the less musically impassioned, have spent your entire lives listening to other people vocalize, but have refused all invitations to join in? Singing along to recordings, alone in our homes and cars, is the only singing far too many of us ever do, aside from karaoke and the occasional off-key punk rock mass shout-along.

The party piano singalong for people of all voices, good, mediocre, and barely competent, seems as quaint a picture today as the Amish horse and buggy, at least after one graduates from kindergarten and stops singing "Row Row Row Your Boat." Instead, one is frequently confronted by the protest, "But I can't sing!," perhaps the saddest four

words associated with music in our language, and one of the phrases punk in particular was meant to obliterate. Well of course you can, unless you're completely tone deaf! Another elderly woman once told me that 90 years ago, before her family owned many recordings, "you didn't compare yourself to [famed Italian opera singer Enrico] Caruso, you just sang." (A parallel: one also hears "I can't dance," a phrase nearly as unthinkable in the 19th century. Even the sou-less, starving peasants and laborers in Emile Zola novels all dance and sing during the little leisure time they are granted by their company-town bosses. But we've seen too much Gene Kelly, Temptations, and Michael Jackson. We often become self-conscious of our modest abilities when constantly bombarded by the highest standards.)

So the question is: What musical pleasures, taken for granted today, will be lost when the smoke clears after the third technological revolution? Before I tackle that, let me clarify one thing. I am not a Luddite and am not arguing that no good will come from these innovations. Like anyone else reading this, I have already found it easier and faster to get information about poorly-marketed/publicized bands via personal email and web pages, powerful tools when posted responsibly for an otherwise out of touch, isolated fan. I too have pointed and clicked my way to purchasing music released in distant places such as Tokyo and Sydney, music which I wouldn't have had such easy access to 10 years ago. And just this year, a subscriber of ours burned a CD for me that contained all the rare non-LP tracks of my favorite Aussie post-punk dynamo, Glide. Even more than home taping previously did, this reader of mine has created an LP for me that otherwise does not exist. And though I have yet to hear an MP3 I thought boasted even the smallest semblance of strong sound quality (I know of at least two friends who were so turned off by a song they initially heard on MP3 that they were impressed by it when I sent them a tape of the song instead!), another of our subscribers sent me a CD-R of a broadcast of a small New York gig I attended (only 40 people were there), which he listened to on his home computer back in Minneapolis, when it was simulcast via the internet. Can you imagine such an obscure concert being nationally broadcast on the King Biscuit Flower Hour 20 years ago? Soon, when real-time images are perfected, we may well be able to watch live concerts from all over. Perhaps we will be able to follow a band's tours, all across the world! Leatherface or Bad Religion in Indonesia? You may have to get up at five in the morning to see them live (as baseball Mets fans did for the recent Mets/Cubs games in Tokyo), but artist willing, you'll see what before you could only have envisioned.

This is truly an explosion, and it's all happening so fast. I laugh when I think that though I was born in the '60s, I grew up with "only" six TV channels, much like my friends in Britain still have. Now with cable and satellite TV, we can watch from 100 (cable) to 300 (satellite). How soon until it is 100,000? Or a million? Every movie, every sitcom, new and old, ever made, for one monthly fee? Perhaps there will be no video stores in 20 years, just as there weren't any 20 years ago! I won't weep when the word "blockbuster" means only a big-budget movie instead of more

urban retail homogenization. Might that not also be the future of live and recorded music on the internet? Sounds great, doesn't it? But will such developments put the beloved record store out of business, too? (R.I.P. about 20 of my favorites, so far, slain by the internet.)

Hadn't considered that, had you? Again, advances have hidden costs. In 1977, when the term fanzine was first created (let's give a hail to early punk fanzine pioneers of the late '70s such as *Search and Destroy*, *Back Door Man*, *Flipside*, *Sniffing Glue*, *Creep*, and so many others!!! You all made for such exciting, newsy reading!), the editors and art directors had only typewriters, scotch tape, paste up boards and super glue, pen erasers (not even white out!), slow and bulky copy machines, and "snail" mail at their disposal. The avalanche of PCs has made magazine production (and probably your job) 1000 times more efficient, but in 1980 none of us suffered from severe screen eye-strain, carpal tunnel syndrome, or the feeling of complete helplessness when your computer crashes (like I hope mine won't before I finish composing this!). And just as important, how many hours are now spent chained to that flickering screen, emailing and web surfing, hours that were previously spent on more social activities? Email was supposed to free up time for us, but like most labor-savings devices it's creating more work in its place.

The hidden costs of so-called progress are too often buried in our bullish histories. For instance, in one of the central considerations of this continent's history, I have often wondered what America looked like to the Native Americans and first European settlers - before automobiles and industrial pollution, before the world became paved and pockmarked with ugly factories and disgusting smokestacks such as one sees from the New Jersey Turnpike. People were all far less mobile, especially before the Spanish introduced horses here 500 years ago, and had few finished goods at their disposal, but there was no hole in the ozone layer over Antarctica, noon in Mexico City didn't look like dusk, acid rain was unheard of (here in my New York state and in Canada just above us, we get our acid rain from Ohio, thanks a frickin' lot!), and they could drink from the rivers. Again, I'm not saying I want to live in an Amish paradise or anything (props to Weird Al), but progress has a nasty underbelly that we far too often sweep under the rug. Eventually, we

start to suffer from our shortsightedness.

When progress is at its best, it does a better job of retaining instead of obliterating that which was worth preserving, at least to the degree that that's possible.

This is what we should have in mind as we all await the new musical technological transformation. None of us are sure what will happen, but we do know what form the revolution is taking. How will the industry change? What will be the ultimate impact on the best bands and artists, whether well known or underground?

The major label consolidations, mergers, and mass artist droppings are the first indication of the winds of change, an obvious "circling of the wagons" in the midst of a powerful attack [aside: in another one of the most ridiculous myths associated with the American West, 19th Century wagon trains never circled when threatened by hostile, understandably angry native Americans. For one thing, they never would have had the time to do such a thing, since, because of dust considerations, and they never rode single file, right behind each other, like cars on a one lane highway. But I am sure you will permit me to use the phrase anyway.] They majors are scared, and with good reason. They've had a nice, century-long oligopoly on music recordings, and they are in danger of

Like anyone else reading this, I have already found it easier and faster to get information about poorly-marketed/publicized bands via personal email and web pages, powerful tools when posted responsibly for an otherwise out of touch, isolated fan.

losing it unless they can find some way to stop the internet's instant distribution of computer files. Which they can't, the suckers. Right now the majors have Napster on the brain, even though every single piece of data around indicates that their sales are increasing. Instead of suing the best promotional tool they have since radio stations stopped playing more than 25 songs a week, they should be buying into and taking over the portals, the same way they did to once-fabulous, wholly maverick indie labels like Atlantic and Elektra (yes, they were once like Epitaph and Fat Wreck Chords, 40 years ago!). But they're too scared and too myopic to even understand the most basic tenet of their continued possibilities for total domination. Can't say I myself feel too bad about their terrified vexation.

'Cause it's their fault, anyway. They were the ones who did away with vinyl and doubled the price of an album that cost them less to manufacture. (CDs are cheaper to press than vinyl, yet the list price went from \$8 to \$17.) They are getting their kick in the pants for that one now. The majors were the ones who hit on the bright idea to reduce music to a piece of digital information, the ones and zeros that only approximate analog's depth, and forced us to swallow it because it made them more money. (Now I hear they want to do it to us all over again by introducing another new format, DVDs for music. It is possible, however, that they will be preempted this time by the emergence and soon-come mass improvements of MP3.) In so doing, they made it inevitable that music would become as easy to pass along as any word processing document, jpeg photograph, database, or spreadsheet - without anything being packed, mailed, shipped, or displayed for sale.

But is this necessarily good for the great bands and artists we champion in *Hit List*, so many of them a million miles away from the popular charts? All I've heard to date is that it is, and I think we should consider this more carefully. As immigrants once envisioned streets paved with gold after years of being shut out of prosperity in their homelands, this sounds to me like pure, unadulterated wishful thinking. In my view, only the hardest-working, smartest, best, and luckiest underground bands will survive and prosper (or most likely, the best-connected, same as now), even if they avoid the major temptation of major label money and ultimate servitude. And somehow, it's hard to imagine that the major corporations such as Seagrams (I love that, a liquor company controlling music) and Sony won't find some way to keep their fingers all over the pie. (No, I don't know how they will, particularly if they keep piling on Napster, paving the way for a much more harmful-to-them, more shadowy and impossible-to-find-to-sue Grunella, but I just feel they will.)

But perhaps the playing field will be leveled more than it is at present, as the real major label strangleholds of marketing, publicity, and distribution are on the verge of becoming available to all. What one hears most of all is that the internet is about to bring about "the democratization of music." Perhaps. But before we get there, there have already been some alarming tendencies as the walls have begun to fall.

For example, the first barrier to making, marketing, and distributing an album has always been the prohibitive cost of recording one - even for a punk rock band that doesn't spend 8-16 weeks painstakingly overdubbing every little minuscule mistake. This is why labels have traditionally controlled music. They've acted as investment bankers, setting onerous loan terms for repayment of these loans out of meagre royalties. But now it's becoming much cheaper to record, which on the

JACKRABID

surface sounds good. But is it? Ask any music magazine editor or radio station music director. And I'm sure that editor Bale will back me up on this. They've all caught sight of a new monster: the horrific glut of LPs.

Music buyers are obsessing about MP3s and CD-Rs, and our music-hound acquaintances haven't been to a music store in two years because they buy all their CDs off the web, as if that had no drawbacks (I have met some of my closest friends in record stores, whether owners, employees, or fellow customers, and have found far more prized recordings by sheer unplanned accident than a net experience could ever inspire. Just recently, a buddy of mine found a new retrospective collection of the Ruts' earliest demos that neither of us knew existed). Meanwhile, musicians have been obsessing about home recording equipment. Taken in tandem with the new distribution and marketing tools, this is the least noticed advance in the new revolution.

Keep in mind that the underground cognoscenti have already lowered the standards of acceptable audio quality for an album, meaning that even the crudest cassette or four-track instant recording has become desirable. To a degree, lo-fi releases have their charms. 78s my grandmother would have heard 90 years ago were even cruder, and they were also recorded live. And despite increasing fidelity, music remained mostly "live in the studio" until the early 1960s, when Phil Spector, Brian Wilson, George Martin, Shel Talmy, and the Motown folks began to create sonic masterpieces by painstaking but still not slick overdubbing a process that became much easier with the advent of eight-track and

then 16-track tape. Then in the '70s, as I have noted, the multitrack process of overdubbing became routinely abused to the point that all the spontaneity and excitement of live music become expunged. In some ways, home recordings are the biggest reaction against a Mariah Carey or Bon Jovi, or even some of the early punk or garage bands when they made the jump to major label budgets. Like old folk "field" recordings, they are so spontaneous that it's become the main point of them.

But the field recordings of the 1930s that have lasted were made by huge talents. Crude recordings were all they had access to, so that wasn't the point. The home-taping revolution cannot fail to hide the faults of those using such methods to record. When something becomes too easy (like multitrack taping), it's prone to descend into mass mediocrity. Home taping, combined as it is with CD-R burners and cheap CD pressings, has inspired a huge excess of independent and punk music releases, though the market for them has not increased. Basically, we have all inadvertently cheapened and devalued the once thrilling concept of the independent LP. This is what is more responsible for diluting the power of the independent scene as a viable alternative to major label dross, and now it is about to get exponentially worse. So this is this what the "democratization" of music begets?

Recently, while speaking at a panel at the Boston music conference, NEMO, I remarked that the greatest underground American punk bands of 20 years ago, such as the Avengers, Weirdos, and Dils, were under-recorded. Though they were wildly popular in their local scenes, managed to sell out gigs, and garnered national publicity via rave accounts in *Slash* and *Search and Destroy* (and even a lengthy *Time* article) and even did some touring in the days before there was any kind

Recently, while speaking at a panel at the Boston music conference, NEMO, I remarked that the greatest underground American punk bands of 20 years ago, such as the Avengers, Weirdos, and Dils, were under-recorded.

HIT SQUAD

of circuit, these groups managed in their 11 years of combined existence to produce a grand total of six singles and two EPs. (These records now go for over \$100 each, despite the retrospective albums that have come out since, a testament to their enduring greatness if ever there was one.) There were no viable indie labels back then beyond a tiny handful who were either unable to finance and distribute an LP or were unwilling to take on the small, upstart punk rock scene. Back then it was too hard to record, press, distribute, and sell non-major label records.

That would soon change, but even in the midst of the 1980s indie explosion, magazines such as my own *Big Takeover* would only get two or three indie singles and LPs a day (note: far more singles per release than one sees today). An album was an impressive achievement, and was mostly the province of groups one had heard of somewhere. These were bands that were playing live and being covered in their local zines or culture papers, maybe even in some national media. A trip to the better local record stores would enable one to find a good two-thirds of these records on the shelf.

Here in the year 2000, my own mailbag is stuffed with an average of 25 CDs a day, nearly all of them LPs, roughly 600 a month, 500 of which I have never heard of before even though it's my livelihood and I am on constant lookout for good music. A trip to that same store will turn up only two or three of these 25 LPs a day, and for good reason: the proprietors haven't heard of them either. In a mere two decades, we have gone from a state where it was practically impossible to make and sell an album without major label backing, to a time where it is a "ho hum" proposition, as easy to manufacture as it is to forget. This is a sad state of affairs, and it figures to worsen the moment it takes no more than a modem, a mouse, a point, and a click to download a band's new LP.

This perhaps is the so-called "DIY" ethic perverted to the most extreme degree. The "anyone can do it" cry was always a fallacy, even in the so-called glory days of punk, as I and this mag's own editor remember all too clearly, bereft of any rose-colored glasses. It was never "anyone can do it." It was "anyone can try it," a colossal difference. That was what made 1976-1983 punk, garage, rockabilly, noise, art-rock, and power-pop such an incredible scene. DIY means simply, "no barrier to entry," which sounded like a radical concept in and of itself. However, back then the scene more easily weeded out those without artistic merit or anything much to say, because it was such a Herculean task to build a modest live following and release a record, as my Dils/Weirdos/Avengers example demonstrated. Ditto on the East Coast, where Bad Brains tore up every club on the coast but had only a solitary 7" to sell for three years, and one LP on cassette for the next two! Yet despite the lack of releases, or perhaps because of it, the most popular groups in the underground tended to be the most exciting ones with the most unique approach, sound, ability, attitude, intelligence, and desire. But now, DIY means "anyone can put out an LP, regardless of any demand existing for it." The term DIY is itself nearly as bankrupt as DDIY, or "don't do it yourself, you're not good enough," was before punk.

Now don't get me wrong. As I also said on that panel, one hesitates to tell a musician or a band, "Don't make an LP." That would be rather fascist, or at least elitist. But I can say that some bands should work a little harder before they tackle this ultimate statement of artistic intent. Just because they have some money saved up and because it is getting

easier logistically to do so, doesn't mean it's time to make an album - particularly if your sole ambition in life is to ape note-for-note, chord-for-chord, the established veteran bands on the scene, from Sebadoh to NOFX. The world does *not* need more immediately forgettable LPs. Without any demand, or much potential for one, an LP is really just vanity publishing.

More importantly, it takes a real toll on the music scene. I wrote a similar editorial about glut a decade ago when the problem first began, when I got half of what I get today. "Too many undemanded LPs," I complained. Similarly, a decade from now, I can see getting 50 CDs a day to review, with the same one or two being of any interest. True, this might well be the ultimate democratization of music, and I bet some people reading this think that this is actually a boon and that I should shut my mouth and appreciate the fact that I get so many recordings gratis. But in my opinion, all that will be accomplished is that it will be even harder to get genuinely great music heard, not only by music journalists or radio programmers, but even on small websites. It is one thing to offer music for sale. It is another thing entirely to draw enough attention to a release to entice people to actually buy it. The more glut, the more "noise," just as it is harder to hear conversation in a loud restaurant. The more glut, the harder it is to find that brilliant needle in the haystack.

Even on the distribution end, I feel trepidation over the coming net explosion. Again, as I said in a previous column here, if music is reduced

to nothing but that file of information, easily downloaded with a few clicks, does that mean that people will love it more? How will we ever get back to the place where music is a devout experience for people, instead of just another purchase, just another thing to click and send? How will we ever reclaim that place where music flat out matters? Instead, I predict our attitudes will grow more cavalier and that distribution will become even more ho hum, with little emotion or learning invested. Just like today's pristine, pretty natural habitat is tomorrow's cookie-cutter suburban sprawl of tacky ranch houses next to fire zones. Whoops.

Where is the experience of music in the future?

Even CD-R's. When someone burns a CD-R of an LP for you, do you have it? Or do you want to go buy your own copy? It used to be that when someone taped an LP for me, if I liked it I would go out and buy it. Home taping was saving the music industry from itself, not "killing" it, as their shrill warnings once sounded. But now, will CD-R's kill music sales more than inspire them? And if so, how will the more legitimate LPs, especially those expensively-recorded in proper studios, be funded, and how will their makers' touring be funded? How, in short, will artists and labels be paid?

CD-R's have another big drawback. It's bad enough that vinyl LP artwork, once such a huge part of an LP, got reduced to the dud of a little CD sleeve - like the difference between seeing "North By Northwest's" airplane scene on a small TV screen instead of in a big screen movie theater. With home-burned CD-R's and MP3's, this will become even worse, since they will likely be getting rid of artwork all together. That little evocative visual of a great record sleeve will soon be taken away from us too, just as videos have formed the too-dominant and too-specific visual for people hearing music.

And what if there are no more record/CD stores? If we put them out

DIY means simply, "no barrier to entry," which sounded like a radical concept in and of itself.

of business, we lose our church, of sorts. We lose the place to hang out with others with similar interests, exchanging information face to face instead of using computer keyboards. We will no longer commune with the music on display, no longer flick through the racks and look at the sleeves for clues and ask questions of the other customers and clerks. Perhaps some of us have been too obsessive about this (see High Fidelity), but for me and most people I know it's been a rather nice social pleasure, and has led to many lasting bonds that go well beyond a shared love of music.

This, then, is the picture of the internet age to come: Music is about to be far less of a communal experience, yet again. And that's really too bad. One of the greatest things about music was always its social potential, a starting place for people to meet and talk. I have never met a single friend by chance while going to the movies. I have met dozens at gigs, record stores, and rehearsal spaces...This is especially true when the music we favor reflects the larger world around us. How many Stiff Little Fingers fans became interested in "the troubles" in Belfast, as I did in 1979? Something that had never entered my mind for more than 10 seconds before that. How many Dead Kennedys fans suddenly took an interest in the killing fields of Cambodia in 1980? The more we sit in our homes and point and click and disengage, the less connection can be made in the flesh, and the less we exchange information and opinions that transcend music and picayune dissections of it. (The role of most email lists and chat rooms.)

Again, the change isn't all bad. It's easy to lament the drawbacks, clinging to the familiar and shortchanging the powerful tools newly acquired. There's no question that getting rid of the middleman (record companies and/or distributors) will give more great artists the long-sought freedom from corrupt and inefficient labels, ineffective distribution, and lack of funds for future projects. It also returns us to the 40s/50s, when an indie like Sun Records could more easily

recognize a great style of music that the majors were mostly avoiding for their own pathetic, conservative, even racist reasons, and end up selling half a million records. When a sale means a sale, i.e., money in your own pocket instead of the pockets of hundreds of people in the music business, that can only be good for an artist or honest indie label. But it only works if you can get people to continue to invest their emotions and money in you, which requires exposure beyond just another website. For all the pitfalls and despicable aspects of the music biz, it has had the ability to successfully mass-market Frank Sinatra, the Beatles, the Kinks,

Louis Armstrong, Hank Williams, the Sex Pistols, the Clash, R.E.M., and Radiohead, all greatly creative and original stylists known to your average music fan or even your average citizen. With-state-of-the-art recording and a whole lot of marketing and publicity, artists have become recognized and discussed, and have inspired countless more to pick up an instrument or a microphone. Great music that doesn't merely remain on the fringes makes us sing as one, both literally and metaphorically. I often think of the example of the members of the 80's band the Farm insisting on singing to ex-Clash member Mick Jones, a cappella, the entire (long!) words of his old band's classic "White Man

JACKRABID

in Hammersmith Palais," and getting them all right. Isn't that the sort of inspiration and feeling music should inspire in us? Not just another commodity, not just another product, not even just another cool indie or punk band to name drop or slam dance to, and Zeus forbid, not just another piece of data zipping around the stratospheres! In the end it has NEVER mattered how music has come to people, from that lute player 2400 years ago, to the symphonies of 250 years ago, or even the car stereo stuck on the 5 or 101 freeway. What matters is our appreciation of it, and our spiritual, mental, and cultural connection to it. Let us not throw this baby-out with the water of mass technological apathy. Or else, like a 10 year old playing video games by himself instead of being out of the house playing ball or four-square or kick the can with neighboring kids as I was, we are all just going to get that much lonelier and stunted.

In any case, the finger's out of the dike, the dam is straining, and the flood will soon be upon us. And when someone starts gushing to you about how great it's all going to be, remember those people happily singing together at the piano in 1870. Here's betting that not only the things we dislike will get washed away. The glut of independent releases is about to worsen in conjunction with the ease and complacency of obtaining them, and with it, consumer alienation is bound to increase. Check back in a few decades when the revolution's dead are buried. And don't forget to fasten your seat belts. ☺

(To check out Jack's 20-year old magazine, *The Big Takeover*, have a look at the website at www.bigtakeover.com. Sample copies are only \$3 and subscriptions are only \$20 for four issues.)

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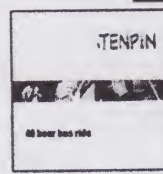
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During the late 1960s and the 1970s, there was a vast upsurge in the social and spiritual appeal of what might best be referred to as non-mainstream religious and therapeutic movements. This was in part a byproduct of the far-reaching "do your own thing" spirit associated with the 60's counterculture, and in part a reflection of the renewed "search for meaning" undertaken by many affluent and highly educated youths in industrial societies, both in the West and elsewhere, who sought to fill a perceived spiritual or psychological void in their lives. This unique cultural climate, coupled with recently relaxed immigration laws, made it possible for the leaders of many newly-established religious movements, domestic and foreign, to acquire a substantial following in the United States and Europe. The most famous of these were Sun-Myung Moon's Unification Church, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), Moses Berg's Children of God (COG), the Church of Scientology, the People's Temple of Jim Jones, and the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh's movement.

Given the constitutional protections for freedom of religion and the religious diversity that have long been characteristic of America, the appearance and proliferation of these somewhat peculiar new religious movements was not initially perceived as a threat, serious or otherwise, by the American public. Only religious and social conservatives affiliated with various fundamentalist sects or dogmatic subgroups within mainstream religious denominations, who were especially concerned with defending Judeo-Christian doctrinal orthodoxy against the seductive "false dogmas" and "bizarre rites" of new religious groups they viewed as "counterfeit" pseudo-religions, if not as "heretical" or "satanic" forces, were truly alarmed. These intolerant and often persecuto-

rial religious zealots, who are now referred to collectively by scholars as the "counter-cult movement" (hereafter CCM), quickly established a number of organizations that were devoted to denigrating and indeed demonizing non-mainstream religious movements, most often by disseminating lurid, sensational accounts about their "corrupt" beliefs and "sinister" practices.⁽¹⁾ Because of their narrow focus on preserving religious orthodoxy and the blatant bigotry they often displayed toward any and all non-believers, these "counter-cult" activists were not at first able to attract many allies from outside their own circles.

However, once the close personal relatives of a growing number of American and European citizens started joining these unfamiliar new religious organizations, in the process sometimes cutting themselves off completely from their own families and close friends, legitimate concerns about the real nature of these groups inevitably began to surface. These concerns, which were periodically intensified by sensationalistic fear-mongering and paranoid conspiracy theorizing, became even more pronounced after disaffected individual members began abandoning these movements, returning to their "normal" lives, and providing insider accounts that revealed sordid details about their respective doctrines, organizational structures, financial operations, social activities, and internal control mechanisms. These disillusioned former cult members, who were soon dubbed "apostates" by their critics, expressed profound regrets about their previous association with such groups, which they felt had manipulated them psychologically, isolated them socially, exploited them economically, and, in some cases, even abused them physically or sexually. Once these horror stories — whether factual or fanciful — began circulating more widely, concerned relatives

and friends of people still affiliated with these groups began organizing grassroots counter-movements to oppose what they had increasingly come to view as "destructive" cults whose leaders had made use of "mind control" techniques to "brainwash" and enslave their own followers. Thus was born the so-called "anti-cult movement" (hereafter ACM). As the 1970s wore on, many of these local and group-specific citizens action groups began to coalesce into larger umbrella organizations whose purpose was provide psychological support to their members, exchange information, enlist the aid of the media to publicize their cause and influence public opinion, and alert local, state, and federal regulatory agencies about the myriad dangers they felt these cults posed, both to the individual and to society at large. By the 1980s, the most important of these umbrella groups were the American Family Foundation (AFF) and the Cult Awareness Network (CAN).⁽²⁾

So far, so good. Forming citizen lobbies is as American as apple pie. It is perfectly understandable that people would become concerned when their loved ones suddenly ran off to join religious communes, adopted seemingly strange new worldviews, and divorced themselves wholly or in part from their closest associates (not to mention mainstream society), and under these circumstances it isn't at all surprising that some of them would thence organize groups to discuss their concerns and seek to respond effectively to these traumatic developments. But problems arose when others sought to exploit these legitimate concerns in order to promote their own religious agendas or commercial enrichment. Here I am referring primarily to CCM activists, on the one hand, and so-called "deprogrammers", on the other, who sought with varying degrees of success to make common cause with the ACM, at

The cult

times with the unwitting assistance of naïve or desperate ACM activists themselves, and therefore tended to become associated with the latter movement in the eyes of the public. Unlike the CCM, however, the ACM was made up of a broad cross-section of concerned citizens, including religious, non-religious, and even anti-religious people, whose objections to religious cults were rationalized — usually honestly but sometimes, especially after it was infiltrated by counter-cult activists, for tactical reasons — on *secular* rather than religious grounds.

For their part, deprogrammers were individuals who — usually for a substantial fee — offered to “rescue” loved ones that had been ensnared by dangerous and deceptive cults, if necessary by using force, and then to reverse the programming they had been subjected to by cult leaders. Most deprogrammers were not psychiatrists or certified psychologists, much less experts on techniques of coercive persuasion and thought reform, but rather independent entrepreneurs drawn from the ranks of private investigators and bounty hunters. Whatever their background, they soon became notorious for forcibly abducting members of cults and subjecting them to harsh psychological treatment in an effort to restore their “true” personalities. The Manson Family criminal trial had already reintroduced the concept of “brainwashing” into popular discourse, and it was the attribution of sophisticated brainwashing techniques to religious cults that provided a justification for kidnapping and “deprogramming” their adult members. However, the abuses associated with individual deprogrammers such as Ted Patrick, and indeed with the entire process of deprogramming, soon brought civil libertarians and self-styled defenders of religious freedom into the fray.⁽³⁾

The battle lines were now drawn, and the



WARS

part one

battle was soon joined. On one side were the "cult-bashers" and "cult-busters", some of them academic experts, who believed that these peculiar fringe groups were dangerous and destructive pseudo-religions which subjected their members to "coercive persuasion", and on the other side were the "cult apologists", above all civil libertarians, proponents of near absolute freedom of religion, and a coterie of scholars who studied what

views already existed, both among the NRMs themselves and among their opponents, and they contributed mightily to the acrimonious tenor of the debates in which scholars later became involved. Third, by the end of the 1980s several high profile scandals involving a number of so-called "cults" — including the Manson Family's brutal murders (and purported links to the satanist Process Church of the Final Judgement), the use of violence by Synanon members against some vocal opponents, the COG's use of prostitution ("flirty fishing") to recruit adherents, the "Koreagate" scandal involving the Unification Church, the mass murder/suicide at Jonestown, the attempt by Rajneeshpuram leaders to poison their Oregon neighbors, the involvement of a "dirty tricks" section established by the Church of

more recent times, given the tragic siege of the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, the mass suicides instigated by Heaven's Gate and the Order of the Solar Temple, and Aum Shinrikyo's launching of covert chemical and biological warfare attacks in Japan.) Fourth, the financial inducements offered to academic investigators, both by NRMs to "facilitate" (i.e., influence) their research and by various parties in exchange for testifying in court cases, has resulted in a situation where vested financial interest may have led to the corruption of scholarly integrity. Finally, certain parties in this debate appear to have hidden agendas of a personal, political, or religious nature, agendas which are still not entirely clear.

This bitter scholarly (and not so scholarly) conflict over the nature of NRMs has ebbed and flowed over the years, with each side having acquired the upper hand for a time. In the wake of the Jonestown tragedy, those scholars and groups that had developed strongly negative attitudes toward religious cults succeeded in influencing popular perceptions and provoking government agencies to convene hearings,

they themselves referred to as New Religious Movements (NRMs) rather than cults. During the 1970s these same scholars had published a number of books, both about NRMs in general and about particular groups, almost all of which were extremely sympathetic toward the non-mainstream religions under investigation. Two leading members of this group of NRM specialists, Anson Shupe and David Bromley, also published the very first study of the ACM, *The New Vigilantes*, whose biases were clearly reflected in the book's title. Under normal circumstances a scholarly dispute about the applicability of the "brainwashing" concept and the group dynamics of religious sects would have been carried out in a relatively sober, even-tempered fashion, but in this case several factors mitigated against such a civil debate.

First, the conflict between NRMs and their opponents had already become highly charged and polemical even before scholars began to involve themselves in it, and for obvious reasons. It's hardly surprising that when such fundamental core values as a concern for the welfare of family members and close friends, on the one hand, and a concern for the preservation of religious liberty, on the other, come into conflict, strong emotions will surface and tempers will flare. Second, groups with extremist

Scientology (the so-called Guardian

Department) in a wide array of illegal operations, and the murder of defectors carried out by ISKCON members — had already made it impossible for anyone to view these controversial matters in a detached way. (This problem has scarcely been alleviated in

if not in outlawing certain deceptive intragroup practices or stripping various movements of their "religious" status. During this period, roughly between 1978 and 1986, the "cult apologists" who strongly sympathized with the NRMs they studied tended to view themselves as a beleaguered minority within the academic community. However, after redoubling their efforts to resist what they perceived as ever-growing threats to religious liberty, and by successfully refuting the most outlandish charges levelled against particular NRMs by the CCM and ACM, they were eventually able to swing the pendulum back in the other direction and establish a kind of intellectual orthodoxy in the field of religious studies. This became clear in the wake of the decision in an important court case, *Molko and Leal v. the Holy Spirit Association* (in which the California Supreme Court refused to convict the group of "brainwashing" the two plaintiffs because the existence of coercive persuasion remained a

"factual question" that even social scientists could not agree upon), when they sought to persuade respectable academic bodies like the Social Science Research Council, the American Psychological Association, and the American Sociological Association to file *amicus curie* briefs with the U.S. Supreme Court in support of the Holy Spirit Association. These partisan briefs concluded that there was "no evidence to suggest that anything can substitute for physical coercion in the process of 'coercive persuasion'", and falsely claimed that "all available research refutes any such claim." As one critic has charged, in reference to most of the NRM scholarship published between 1987 and the late 1990s, it had become politically correct to "defend NRMs and to attack those who argued that some NRM members may have been brainwashed." (4)

It is not my purpose in this short introduction to resolve these exceedingly thorny matters in a definitive fashion and thereby end the acrimonious disputes between scholars, but simply to illuminate the context within which the "cult" wars have been fought. However, I

cated new techniques of psychological manipulation that were capable of transforming previously normal individuals into mindless automatons or robots who could be controlled against their will by others, themes which were popularized in the media and dramatized in some truly innovative films, most notably "The Manchurian Candidate". Not surprisingly, the most sensational and extravagant claims that were made about brainwashing in the popular press were later demolished, undermined, or substantially revised by social psychologists, who examined the actual evidence and thence developed various models to describe the actual multi-phase process of what they referred to as "thought reform", "coercive persuasion", or "mentacide" rather than "brainwashing". (5)

In recent years academic apologists for NRMs have repeatedly (and often disingenuously) sought to banish the term "brainwashing" from scholarly discourse by undermining the legitimacy of the entire concept, either by attacking straw men (e.g., untenable journalistic caricatures of the process that no serious

robbed of their will...[but rather that] resocialization remaps the values and preferences of the subject so that the subject voluntarily chooses to do what the group wants him to do. The goal of brainwashing is to create deployable agents...There is nothing in the definition to imply that brainwashing is easy to accomplish, always effective, or impossible to resist...[On the contrary,] *brainwashing is likely to always remain a relatively rare phenomenon because of the difficulty of achieving a high degree of milieu control and charismatic influence necessary to make it effective* (emphasis added)." (6) Some would go even further and argue that brainwashing involves systematically breaking down key features of an individual's personality structure, and one of the best analyses of thought reform in relation to cults has made a useful distinction between social control organizations that attack *central* elements of the self and those that only attack *peripheral* elements of the self. Obviously, the former are capable of causing far more psychological damage, both in the short term and the long term. (7)

believe that much of this ongoing debate misses the point entirely, both because some scholars have been genuinely duped and because others have knowingly engaged in dissimulation and distortion. The core questions at issue are 1) whether something that can be termed "brainwashing" exists at all, and 2) whether certain NRMs make extensive use of it to control their followers. The answer to both of these questions is clearly yes, as anyone who is familiar with the literature and possesses a modicum of common sense should be able to recognize.

The term "brainwashing" was first coined by a journalist in the mid-1950s to explain why a number of Allied POWs captured during the Korean War had publicly denounced their own countries and societies on enemy radio broadcasts, using phraseology that was typical of official Chinese communist propaganda campaigns. Most of the POWs who did so immediately repudiated their actions upon returning home, and admitted that they had been tortured and coerced into saying such treasonous things, but some returning POWs acted as if they remained in a state of shock and continued to parrot the same enemy rhetoric for some time after being released from captivity. This generated widespread fears that the Chinese communists had developed sophisti-

scholar has ever accepted) or by claiming that the early models developed by social scientists in connection with communist POWs were inapplicable in the context of NRMs, since the latter's social control mechanisms supposedly did not include physical imprisonment or coercion. Aside from the fact that a considerable number of cult-like groups *have* employed physical coercion — up to and including murder — and/or forcible confinement in an effort to control recalcitrant followers, the available evidence indicates that a complex array of manipulative psychological practices can be characterized as coercive, and that if these practices are employed consciously and systematically there's no reason why they should not be labelled "brainwashing" (or "coercive persuasion", etc.) — provided that scholars carefully delimit the meaning of that term.

A fair effort to clarify the meaning of the concept has recently been made by Benjamin Zablocki, one of the first social scientists to carry out extensive fieldwork on non-mainstream religious and social groups. According to Zablocki, "brainwashing is to be understood as nothing more than an orchestrated process of ideological conversion that takes its subjects through a well-defined sequence of social psychological stages...the brainwashing conjecture does not assert that subjects are

In any event, outside of totalitarian societies and prisons, where the highest degrees of authoritarian milieu control are possible, very few social organizations are able to achieve sufficient levels of milieu control and charismatic influence to successfully engage in "thought reform". Among those that actually *have* the capacity to do so are communal religious, political, or psychotherapeutic groups with charismatic leaders, especially those which espouse apocalyptic, world-transformative ideologies and whose headquarters or compounds are geographically isolated. A "religious cult" can therefore be defined, in the strict sense of the term, as a NRM which systematically employs well-known techniques of coercive persuasion, irrespective of the precise nature of its theological doctrines.

When it comes to assessing whether particular small-scale social organizations, non-mainstream or otherwise, are bona fide cults, or whether they merely display certain cult-like features, all one needs to do is pay careful attention to their internal social control mechanisms and authority structures. This is not all that hard to do if as long as one remains skeptical about the claims of leaders and true believers, is allowed to conduct fieldwork or at least observe the group for a time, is able to obtain detailed inside information from pre-

sent and former members (above all apostates who, having become alienated from their former group, are more likely to retrospectively notice particular manifestations of manipulation and authoritarianism), and knows what telltale signs to look for. In the case of religious groups, the following can all be viewed as warning signs:

- a) selective recruitment of psychologically vulnerable targets
- b) initial deception concerning group affiliation and purposes
- c) application of extreme and often degrading forms of peer group pressure, including forced public "confessions"
- d) ongoing isolation from mainstream society (especially relatives and friends) at retreats
- e) sensory overload
- f) sleep and protein deprivation
- g) constant surveillance or enforced lack of privacy
- h) exploitation of labor (12-16 hour work days)
- i) confiscation of personal assets
- j) intense ideological indoctrination
- k) sexual exploitation
- l) physical abuse and imprisonment
- m) authoritarian forms of charismatic leadership

Religious, therapeutic, political, or hybrid groups that possess all or most of these characteristics can legitimately be categorized as thought reform cults, whereas those that exhibit only a few of these traits can perhaps best be described as "cult-like" or potentially "cultic". To portray groups with these characteristics as nothing more than "harmless" alternative religions and "innocent" victims of religious persecution, as NRM scholars almost invariably do, defies all logic.

Perhaps the most egregious example of this sort of embarrassing sophistry can be seen in the astonishing reaction of several leading NRM scholars to the belated police crackdown on members of the apocalyptic Aum Shinrikyo cult in Japan. Even before this dramatic finale, as evidence was slowly but surely mounting that the group had murdered both adherents and opponents, and that it was testing, producing, and actually using chemical and biological agents to attack civilians, several Japanese experts on NRMs, most notably Hiromi Shimada and Shin'ichi Nakazawa, publicly defended the group and complained that its members were being unjustly targeted by the authorities. This was not merely a distortion of reality, but a complete reversal of the true situation: the authorities were in fact absurdly *lax* in terms of their response to the growing threat posed by the group. Still more incredibly, even *after* Aum leaders had been charged with attempted mass murder and their followers began to be arrested, a delegation of four Americans, including two leading NRM

apologists, J. Gordon Melton (head of the Institute for the Study of American Religions [ISAR] at the University of California at Santa Barbara) and James R. Lewis (the founder of the Association of World Academics for Religious Education [AWARE], a group that claims to be a religious variant of Amnesty International), flew to Japan *at Aum's expense* to conduct an investigation and defend the group's freedom of religion. Although both initially criticized the mass arrests and detentions of Aum members by the police, Melton later concluded that the cult's leaders were guilty as charged (although he claimed that many members were themselves innocent victims). Lewis, on the other hand, had been completely duped by several deceptive Aum leaders he interacted with, so much so that, despite all evidence to the contrary, he ended up concluding that Aum Shinrikyo was a victim of religious persecution and state repression!(8) If ever there was a group that could justly be characterized as a "destructive cult" and that deserved to be harshly suppressed by the government, it was Aum Shinrikyo. Fortunately, the evidence against Aum was so overwhelming that the utterly ludicrous opinions of these experts, who have apparently never encountered a NRM they didn't admire, were ignored. In the future, the rest of us may not be so lucky. One can only hope that assorted cult apologists won't deter the authorities from taking necessary action the next time a religious cult is producing and preparing to use weapons of mass destruction

In order to shed further light on these important matters we have decided to reprint three interesting articles which reflect various aspects of the current phase of the "cult" wars. The first consists of a discourse on the the historical connections between satanist and vampire panics by Massimo Introvigne, the director of the Centro studi sulle nuove religioni (CESNUR: Center for the Study of New Religions) in Turin. Not only is this an interesting scholarly treatment of an intrinsically fascinating and potentially illuminating topic, but it also epitomizes many of the central themes that are nowadays being promoted by NRM researchers who fancy themselves to be righteous defenders of religious liberty and pluralism. Introvigne's concern is above all with documenting the fraudulent foundations of satanism and vampirism scares that have in the past led to persecutorial responses, whether by the state or by private citizens, since similar types of misperceptions of, and overreactions to, the "threats" posed by unpopular fringe groups can easily precipitate new bouts of anti-religious bigotry and persecution. Lest anyone think that such hysteria is a thing of the past, Introvigne reminds us of the recent "satanic panic" that swept over the United States in the 1980s and early 1990s, a

phenomenon which bore many of the hallmarks of past "witch hunts" but fortunately lacked official sponsorship or enough popular support to lead to serious persecutions. On the face of it, then, there is nothing at all objectionable about Introvigne's analysis, and most readers of a civil libertarian or libertine persuasion will probably find themselves in agreement with his basic conclusions. I certainly did. Having said that, there may well be much more involved here than a simple scholarly interpretation couched in the language of individual rights and religious freedom.

The second article was originally delivered at an academic conference by Professor Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi of the University of Haifa. In this presentation Beit-Hallahmi deals head-on with one of the central issues alluded to above, namely, the blatant partisanship and lack of objectivity among certain circles of sociologists of religion, who tend to view NRMs as allies in the fight for religious freedom (or, at least, as potential external sources of research funding) rather than as objects of detached scientific investigation. Not only does he cite tangible evidence of improper collusion between scholars and NRMs, in the form of an memo [written, though he doesn't identify the author, prepared by Professor Jeffrey Hadden of Virginia Commonwealth University] recommending tangible collaboration with the Unification Church, but he also rightly highlights the foolish and potentially dangerous attempts by certain well-known cult apologists to defend Aum Shinrikyo against very well-founded and thoroughly documented charges that it repeatedly attacked innocent civilians using weapons of mass destruction. Clearly, Beit-Hallahmi's paper should give pause to those who believe that arcane scholarly controversies never have any impact on real-world events.

The third and final article, authored by Herman De Tollenaere and excerpted from a Dutch ecology publication, provides some eye-opening details about peculiar events that transpired at a conference on NRMs sponsored by CESNUR, the organization headed by Massimo Introvigne. A public outcry erupted when it was learned that one of the speakers at the conference was a leading member of the very same NRM she was scheduled to give a paper on, especially since the organization in question happened to be New Acropolis, an international far right occultist group with paramilitary proclivities. This controversy in turn prompted De Tollenaere to provide a bit of information on the nature of CESNUR and the possible bases of its pro-cult stance. Unfortunately, in this particular article he barely managed to scratch the surface of this extraordinarily complex issue, since it turns out that Introvigne's background is very curious indeed. That is a subject to which we shall return in an

-Jeff Bale

ENDNOTES:

- (1) For more on the CCM, see the unsympathetic account of J. Gordon Melton, *The Evangelical Christian Anti-Cult Movement: Christian Counter-Cult Literature* (New York: Garland, 1990). For examples of religiously-inspired counter-cult literature, see Bob Larson, *Larson's New Book of Cults* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1989); Ronald Enroth et al, *A Guide to Cults and New Religions* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1983).
- (2) For the ACM, see the unsympathetic studies by Anson Shupe & David G. Bromley, "The Modern North American Anti-Cult Movement, 1971-91: A Twenty-Year Retrospective", in idem, eds., *Anti-Cult Movements in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (New York & London: Garland, 1994), pp. 3-31; idem, *The New Vigilantes: Anti-Cultists, Deprogrammers, and the New Religions* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1980). A good example of ACM literature is by the founder of the AFF (and the editor of its journal, the *Cultic Studies Journal*), Michael D. Langone, *Destructive Cultism: Questions and Answers* (Weston, MA: American Family Foundation, 1982).
- (3) For radically different points of view concerning the morality, legality, and efficacy of deprogramming, see Ted Patrick, *Let Our Children Go!* (New York: Ballantine, 1976); David G. Bromley & James T. Richardson, eds., *The Brainwashing/Deprogramming Controversy: Sociological, Psychological, Legal, and Historical Perspectives* (New York: Edwin Mellen, 1983);
- (4) See Benjamin Zablocki, "The Blacklisting of a Concept: The Strange History of the Brainwashing Conjecture in the Sociology of Religion", *Nova Religio* 1:1 (October 1997), p. 108.
- (5) The term "brainwashing" was apparently first coined by the journalist Edward Hunter, author of *Brainwashing in Red China: The Calculated Destruction of Men's Minds* (New York: Vanguard, 1956). For early scholarly studies of "thought reform", "coercive persuasion", and "mentacide", based primarily on the experiences of Korean War POWs, see, respectively, Robert J. Lifton, *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1989); Edgar Schein & C.H. Barker, *Coercive Persuasion* (New York: Norton, 1961); and Joost Meerloo, *The Rape of the Mind* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1956).
- (6) Zablocki, "Blacklisting of a Concept", pp. 102-5.
- (7) Richard Ofshe & Margaret Singer, "Attacks on Peripheral versus Central Elements of the Self and the Impact of Coercive Persuasion", *Cultic Studies Journal* 3:1 (1986), pp. 3-24. It should be pointed out that for

several years I served, while still a graduate student at Berkeley, as the teaching assistant for a course on thought reform and cults that was offered by Professor Ofshe. Compare also Philip Zimbardo & Susan Anderson, "Understanding Mind Control: Exotic and Mundane Mental Manipulations", in *Recovery from Cults: Help for Victims of Psychological and Spiritual Abuse*, ed. by Michael D. Langone (New York: Norton, 1983), pp. 104-25.

(8) For a devastating critique of the behavior of NRM scholars in connection with the Aum affair, see Ian Reader, "Scholarship, Aum Shinrikyo, and Academic Integrity", *Nova Religio* 3:2 (April 2000), pp. 368-82. Reader is also the author of the most thorough and insightful book on this subject, *Religious Violence in Contemporary Japan: The Case of Aum Shinrikyo* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i, 2000). For the incredibly misguided interpretation of the Aum affair by James Lewis of AWARE, see "Japan's Waco: Aum Shinrikyo and the Eclipse of Freedom in the Land of the Rising Sun", *Prevailing Winds* 2 (1995), pp. 52-8.

Satanism Scares and Vampirism from the 18th Century to the Contemporary Anti-Cult Movement

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Do vampires really exist? And what does this question really mean? Vampirism has been for centuries a chapter of demonology, and vampire scares have a number of connections with Satanism scares. I will, accordingly, first summarize the history of Satanism scares in recent European and American history and then, in a second part of this paper, explore the history of vampirism.

I. Satanism Scares

In 1993 sociologist Jeffrey S. Victor published a book on allegation of Devil worship and Satanism in the United States. On the first page of the book, Victor noted that "some really bizarre things have been happening in this country. These strange happenings may be omens of one of the biggest secret conspiracies, or one of the biggest hoaxes, in recent history"[1].

These "bizarre things" were not happening for the first time. Satanism scares have occurred repeatedly in the modern Western world. Although vampire scares have an origin independent from

Satanism scares, the two phenomena have a cultural connection. It is, accordingly, worthwhile to offer first, an overview of modern Satanism scares, and second, a summary of the connections between each main Satanism scare and vampires.

I. Satanism and Anti-Satanism:

A Historical Overview

If we define Satanism as the organized worship of what the Bible identifies as Satan or the Devil, by groups which are organized as religious or magical movements, historians agree that Satanism is not a very ancient phenomenon. Rumors of Devil worship surfaced during witchcraft trials in the late 17th century, but there was no suggestion that organized and hierarchical satanic cults existed. The first satanic cult which possibly existed was operated by Catherine La Voisin at the Court of the French monarch Louis XIV. Although some historians are skeptical, the documents of the inquiry by Nicholas de la Reynie, the Police Chief of the king — who was not a particularly religious man but a rather cold and stubborn policeman — published by the 19th century historian François Ravaissin-Mollien, make a persuasive case for the celebration of "Black Masses" (the term was coined by La Voisin herself) at the Court of Louis XIV. "Black Masses" were described as rituals mocking the Roman Catholic Mass, in which Catholic hosts were desecrated through sex rituals and children were occasionally sacrificed to the Devil in order to obtain power and love for the wealthy customers of La Voisin [2]. La Reynie's police effectively destroyed the cult, but the emerging press made the incident infamous for decades in Europe and copycat imitations surfaced during the 18th century and during the French Revolution. These episodes were connected by pious Catholic authors to the Revolution itself, which they believed had been masterminded by anti-Catholic Satanists.

Between 1800 and 1865 more than thirty influential works exposing a widespread Satanist conspiracy were published in France and in other countries [3]. New religious movements such as Spiritualism and Mormonism were also believed to be the creation of the Devil and part of the worldwide satanic conspiracy. For example, the anti-Spiritualist Orestes Brownson (1803-1876) expressed his opinion in the United States that only Satan could have been the real author of the Book of Mormon [4]. His theories were adapted in Europe by the Paris lawyer Joseph Bizouard (1797-1870)

in his six-volume anti-Satanist work published in 1864, which became one of the most influential books in the French anti-Satanism scare of the 1860s [5]. In the meantime — in the second half of the 19th century — an occult subculture flourished in Paris and Lyon, including both non-satanic and satanic occult societies (some of them operated by defrocked Catholic priests). Journalist Jules Bois (1868-1943) and novelist Joris-Karl Huysmans (1848-1907) explored this underworld, and Huysmans published in 1891 a famous novel on Satanism, *Là-bas*, which included one of the most famous literary descriptions of a Black Mass [6]. The Satanists of the 1880s were not invented by Huysmans; they existed, but there were — admittedly — only a few members in two or three small cults in France and Belgium [7]. Again, public opinion overreacted and — in the wake of the success of *Là-bas* — sensational revelations on a worldwide satanic conspiracy were offered to the French public by Dr. Charles Hacks, a medical doctor writing under the pen name of “Dr. Bataille”. Hacks published his huge *Le Diable au XIXe siècle*, whose two volumes appeared between 1892 and

ing scrutiny by both Freemasons (including the British Masonic encyclopedist Arthur Edward Waite, 1857-1942) [10] and Catholics (particularly the Jesuit press in France and Germany). The Jesuits were actively engaged in the anti-Masonic campaign but, at the same time, did not trust Taxil. He was finally pressured to introduce the public to the elusive Diana Vaughan (who had never been seen) or admit that her existence was merely a literary device. In 1897 Taxil confessed at a conference in Paris that there was no Palladism or any worldwide satanic conspiracy at all; his own conversion to Catholicism had been a hoax which he had conceived in order to convince the world how gullible the anti-Masonic Catholics of his time actually were [11].

Although a body of literature inspired by the Taxil fraud continued to be published well into our century (including *L'Élu du Dragon*, a 1929 book claiming that U.S. President James Abram Garfield (1831-1881) had replaced Albert Pike as chief of the worldwide satanic conspiracy shortly before his assassination in 1881) [12], anti-Satanism was largely discredited after the

LaVey's Church of Satan and its main splinter group — the Temple of Set, whose leader is Michael Aquino — are the largest satanic organizations in the world. They are not large. Their combined active membership (not to be confused with their mailing lists) does not exceed one thousand people and is probably even smaller [15]. LaVey's notoriety did have a role in the early stages of the latest anti-Satanist campaign, which can only be understood within the framework of the larger anti-cult propaganda of the 1970s and 1980s.

Summing up, from the Court of Louis XIV to contemporary California the pendulum has periodically swung between Satanism and anti-Satanism. Smaller satanic cults have existed from time to time and have produced — since Satanism is, by definition, intolerable — gross overreactions in the form of Satanism scares. The success of these anti-Satanist campaigns has been self-limited by their own exaggerations. The fact that each wave of anti-Satanism has been discredited has allowed new satanic cults to operate for a while, creating in turn a new overreaction, and so on.

1894, with the help of journalist Léo Taxil, whose real name was Gabriel Jogand (1854-1907) and who had announced with much fanfare his conversion from Freemasonry and anti-clericalism to Catholicism in 1885 [8].

Taxil supplemented Bataille's stories with more of his own, and the whole affair became increasingly wild. Taxil claimed to be the spokesman for Diana Vaughan, a High Priestess of Lucifer who was converting to Catholicism. Vaughan — whose name appeared as editor of a monthly journal published in Paris, *Mémoires d'une ex-Palladiste* — revealed that a huge satanic organization called Palladism was behind Freemasonry, Spiritualism, occultism and new religious movements, including the then controversial Salvation Army and Mormonism. The arch-rival of Diana was another American girl named Sophie Walder, who had been appointed High Priestess of Lucifer in competition with Diana by the satanic Pope himself, the prominent American freemason Albert Pike (1809-1891) [9]. Eventually, Taxil's stories about Diana Vaughan came under increas-

infamous Taxil hoax. When in the 1930s Russian-born occultist Maria de Naglowska (1883-1936) established an openly satanic cult in Paris, the press was more amused than scandalized, and some newspapers characterized Naglowska's Satanism as an interesting religious experiment [13]. The international press was less kind when British magus Aleister Crowley (1875-1947) shocked his contemporaries by styling himself “the Beast 666” and “the wickedest man in the world”. Crowley made use of satanic imagery and is still regarded by many as the founding father of contemporary Satanism. The British occultist, however, was a magical atheist who did not believe in the actual existence of Satan; and although he has been influential on later satanic movements, he could not be regarded as a Satanist in the narrow, technical sense of the term [14]. On the other hand, it is true that Crowley enthusiasts — including movie director Kenneth Anger — were instrumental in founding the Church of Satan in San Francisco in 1966, whose notorious spokesman is the former carnival performer Anton Szandor LaVey. To this day

2. Anti-Cult and Counter-Cult

Movements

The success of the latest Satanism scare in the 1980s can only be understood as a peculiar development in the history of movements which have been created to fight the so-called “cults”. Anti-cult movements are not new in American history. In the 19th century nativist organizations devoted to the defense of a Protestant America labeled as “cults” three groups perceived as quintessentially hostile to the American way of life: Freemasonry, Roman Catholicism, and Mormonism [16]. New entries were gradually added — Seventh-Day Adventists, Christian Science, Jehovah's Witnesses — while Catholics and Mormons were eventually accepted by most Americans as part of the mainstream of the national religious life and anti-Masonry became marginalized. By the end of World War II, hostility towards “cults” was reduced to a bigoted fringe of American Fundamentalism. The situation, however, changed in the 1960s with the emergence of

the youth counterculture and of new religious movements such as the Children of God, the Moonies, and the Hare Krishnas. Their proselytism targeted young adults and college students, leaving their families puzzled and worried when sons and daughters abandoned their secular careers to work full time for a "bizarre" religious movement. The metaphor of "brainwashing" was quickly applied to this apparently unexplainable change in behavior, and a militant opposition first against the Children of God and then against the "big three" (no longer Catholicism, Mormonism, and Freemasonry, but now the Moonies, Krishnas, and Scientologists) spread from California throughout the United States and eventually to many other countries.

The movement against the "cults" was, however, hardly a united front. Students of the organized hostility to the "cults" have recognized the difference between a *secular anti-cult movement* (claiming to discuss only deeds, not creeds) and a *religious counter-cult movement* (where the fight against heretic creeds remains crucial). The different anti-cult and counter-cult movements have occasionally cooperated, but

and secular, "rationalist" and "post-rationalist" — using the example of recent anti-Mormonism and of its different and often conflicting wings [20].

3. The Satanism Scare of the 1980s

In his early studies of hysteria, Sigmund Freud used hypnosis, and for a while became convinced that what he called the "theory of seduction" could explain the genesis of hysteria in female patients. All the patients he hypnotized, in fact, remembered being sexually abused in their childhood, a memory they were not conscious of while not under hypnosis. While Freud was initially persuaded that these memories corresponded to real, historical instances of abuse, he became perplexed when, continuing the hypnotic therapy, almost all the patients "remembered" abuse by Satanists (mostly their parents) in bizarre ceremonies and apparitions of the Devil himself. Freud dismissed these stories as fantasies, abandoned the theory of seduction, and went on

Although *Michelle Remembers* was written from a religious point of view, it was welcomed more by secular mental health professionals than by established Churches. Michelle's story has been interpreted within the context of an ongoing discussion on Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD), a disorder where the same patient "dissociates" into different "alters" who speak with different voices, may have very different personalities, and may not remember what the other "alters" think or do. Two Hollywood movies, "The Three Faces of Eve" in 1957 and "Sybil" in 1973, popularized this rather spectacular, if rare, disorder. The therapist who had treated Sybil, Cornelia Wilbur, was also instrumental in promoting the theory that MPD was almost invariably the result of severe childhood trauma, often in the form of sexual abuse. Not only was Freud's theory of seduction revived, but also Freud himself was accused of a cover-up for his refusal to treat seriously his patients' memories of satanic abuse. In the 1970s Dr. Wilbur was associated at the University of Kentucky with Dr. Arnold Ludwig and other therapists who were already active in the anti-cult movement. In 1984 the First

their relations have become increasingly difficult in recent years [17]. Within each movement against the "cults" — the secular and the religious — differences have also arisen. I have argued elsewhere that both segments of the organized hostility to the "cults" are presently divided into a more moderate "rationalist" and a more extreme "post-rationalist" wing. Within the secular anti-cult movement the "rationalist" wing is composed of professional skeptics who regard the leaders of the "cults" as clever frauds, while the "post-rationalist" wing insists on the theory of "brainwashing", regarded as something magical, or even "the modern version of the evil eye" [18]. Within the religious counter-cult movement the "rationalist" wing argues with logical arguments against the anti-Scriptural heresies of the "cults" and cautions against any attempt to connect the "cults" too directly with the activities of the Devil. The idea that the Devil personally directs the "cults" is, on the other hand, the trademark of the "post-rationalist" wing of the counter-cult movement [19]. I have tried to explore elsewhere the different attitudes — religious

to formulate the alternative explanation for hysteria which eventually made him famous [21]. Eighty years after Freud's early career, the theory of seduction surfaced again. A Canadian Catholic therapist, Lawrence Pazder, was told by his patient Michelle Smith that she had been abused by a satanic cult of international proportions twenty years before as a child, had witnessed horrible scenes of human sacrifice and cannibalism, and had seen the Devil but had forgotten these experiences until beginning therapy with Pazder. Unlike Freud, Pazder concluded that Smith's memories corresponded to true, actual historical events. He persuaded the bishop of his Canadian Diocese to accompany him and Michelle to the Vatican, where their dramatic revelations about Satanism were met with more caution than enthusiasm. Pazder, however, decided to publish a book that eventually became a bestseller, *Michelle Remembers*, in 1980 [22]. Shortly thereafter Pazder left his wife and four children to marry Smith, herself a divorcee, and the couple had to terminate their relationship with the Catholic Church (which does not condone divorce).

International Conference on Multiple Personality/Dissociative States was organized in Chicago, where Wilbur delivered the opening plenary address. By 1986 leaders of the Cult Awareness Network, the largest secular anti-cult organization in the U.S., were invited to address the annual Chicago conference, thus forging an effective link between the MPD professionals and the anti-cult activists. The latter simply applied to the satanic cults whose memories surfaced in MPD patients their model of brainwashing and mind control. The result was twofold: as a result of increasing media coverage of MPD, thousands of patients in the United States began claiming that they were "survivors" who had been abused by satanic cults in their childhood; and their therapists and anti-cult activists alike finally repudiated Freud and claimed that the survivors' stories were literally true. They also called for quick action by public authorities to uncover the perpetrators, who were — they claimed — members of a vast, "multi-generational" and deadly dangerous satanic conspiracy. Anti-satanists also speculated that MPD does not always arise as a sponta-

neous protection against traumatic memories but may be "planted" by Satanists, who presumably have access to sophisticated psycho-technologies enabling them to brain-wash children to the point of dissociation, making their memories so garbled that future identification of the perpetrators becomes virtually impossible [23].

Another development took place in the same years. Survivors in treatment for MPD began relating events that took place decades before their memories surfaced again. Influenced by the survivors' stories, some therapists reasoned that the satanic cults were probably still operating, and that many of the child sexual abuse incidents (unfortunately common in the United States and elsewhere) may have included an undetected satanic element. The first and the most famous case involved the McMartin Preschool in the affluent Los Angeles suburb of Manhattan Beach. The McMartin case began in 1983, when the principals and a number of teachers at the respected preschool were accused of operating an underground satanic cult, which ritually abused and tortured children. Mental health professionals involved in the case were later accused of having "planted" the stories in the children (some of whom were only two or three years old) based on their own persuasion that a satanic conspiracy existed. The McMartin trial was the most expensive in United States legal history and ended in 1990 with no convictions [24]. The McMartin case had an enormous media impact, and it surely had something to do with hundreds of subsequent similar accusations of sexual ritual abuses in both day-care centers and in family settings. Although complete statistical data are lacking, it is possible that as many as two thousand cases of satanic ritual abuse of children were investigated in the decade 1983-1992 [25]. The number of convictions obtained during this ten-year period is a matter of dispute; but skeptical sociologists claim that there are less than five, out of thousands of cases investigated, while anti-Satanists circulate a list of thirteen. Figures are disputed because a specific felony of satanic or ritual abuse has been introduced only recently, and only in some states; in other cases where a conviction for sexual abuse has been obtained it is unclear whether the courts have in fact recognized the existence of a "satanic" element [26]. It is, at any rate, important to distinguish between the stories told by survivors who suffer from MPD and the stories told by children. A bitter debate exists between national lobbies who argue, respectively, that children always tell the truth (Believe the Children) and that their memories are

often false (False Memory Syndrome Foundation). However, while not even a single court conviction has been obtained based on the survivors' stories, at least a handful of cases exist in which abusers who appear to have used satanic symbols and paraphernalia have been convicted based on reports by children. There was no evidence that these abusers belonged to international, organized satanic cults, and no reports of human sacrifice have been confirmed. Some therapists do not believe in the stories of the survivors, but they do believe that some of the stories of satanic abuse told by children may be true.

It is also important not to confuse the debate on satanic ritual abuse of children with discussions of adolescent Satanism. There is little doubt that gangs of teenagers exist which perform some sort of a home-made mix of satanic rituals (copied from comics, books or movies) and drug parties. These teenagers are often guilty of minor crimes such as vandalism or animal sacrifice. In less than a dozen cases more serious crimes appear to have been committed, including a handful of murders. In these cases it is difficult to determine whether drugs, gang-related violence, or Satan worship is mostly responsible for the crimes. What is clear is that teenage Satanism is not connected with any international conspiracy, and it is a different phenomenon from both religious Satanism represented by organizations such as the Church of Satan and "ritual" child abuse by adult perpetrators [27].

Attitudes before the widespread allegations of satanic child abuse in the 1980s reflect the differences between anti-cult and counter-cult movements. Some anti-cult movements — whose influence was declining in the mid-1980s — quickly seized the opportunity of adding Satanism to the list of "cults" they were claiming to fight, and became one of the main forces behind the Satanism scare [28]. While "post-rationalist" organizations such as the Cult Awareness Network do accept the claims of survivors at face value, the "rationalist" wing of the anti-cult movement is predictably more skeptical. CSER, the Committee for the Scientific Examination of Religion, an organization with connections to CSICOP and with the skeptic press Prometheus Books of Buffalo (New York) — both active in exposing "cults" from a secular humanist point of view — reacted very strongly against what it perceived as a superstitious legend. CSER published a report in 1989 in which the Cult Awareness Network was included on a list of "non-experts" on Satanism. The skeptic Committee concluded that the whole idea of a widespread satanic conspiracy was

a huge hoax [29]. Surprisingly, the religious counter-cult movement — although firmly convinced of the existence of the Devil — was quite slow in adding Satanism to its own list of "cults". Evangelical counter-cultists were suspicious of secular psychiatrists who figured too prominently in the promotion of the Satanism scare. Eventually, however, the "post-rationalist" wing of the religious counter-cult movement (already persuaded that the Devil was behind most "cults") accepted the claims of the survivors. Evangelical survivors, prepared to explain their experience in strictly religious terms, began to develop — particularly in Pentecostal and charismatic circles — a technique called "inner healing", where lost memories of childhood abuse are recovered not through secular therapy but through a protracted group prayer on behalf of the disturbed individual [30]. The "rationalist" wing of the evangelical counter-cult movement, on the other hand, flatly refused to jump on the Satanism scare bandwagon. The Christian Research Institute — the organization founded by the late counter-cult activist Walter Martin (1928-1989) — concluded that "there is still no substantial, compelling evidence that satanic ritual abuse stories and conspiracy theories are true (...). Careful investigation of the stories, the alleged victims, and the proponents has given us every reason to reject the satanic conspiracy model" [31]. *Christianity Today*, the most influential voice of American Evangelicalism, recommended "skepticism" in a June 1993 article authored by two Evangelical university professors and noted that while "for nearly a decade, American law enforcement has been aggressively investigating the allegations of victims of ritualistic abuse", so far "there is no evidence for the allegation of large-scale baby breeding [i.e. "producing" babies whose birth is not registered with public authorities for sacrifice in satanic ceremonies], human sacrifice, and organized satanic conspiracies". "We cannot fall victim — the Evangelical professors concluded — to sloppy thinking or judgment based on a mixture of fallacies, non-evidence, and subjectivism. 'He who chases fantasies lacks judgment' (Prov. 12:11)" [32]. In March 1994 the same *Christianity Today* even recommended the ultimate skeptic book on the Satanism scare, *Satanic Panic* by (secular) sociologist Jeffrey S. Victor. The reviewer confirmed, once again, that "to date there has been no investigation that has substantiated the claims of alleged satanic abuse survivors" and quoted John F. Kennedy to the effect that "the great enemy of the truth is very often not the lie — deliberate, contrived, and dishonest — but the myth —



persistent, pervasive, and unrealistic" [33].

The most visible conflict was not, however, between "rationalist" and "post-rationalist" groups against the "cults". Sociologists and other academics specializing in New Religious Movements were united in their militant opposition to the theory of the satanic conspiracy and did much to ridicule the stories of survivors. The publication of the collective work *The Satanism Scare* in 1991 by noted sociologists and anthropologists was a crucial blow to the survivors' credibility [34]. By 1991 even some psychiatric specialists of MPD were harboring doubts on the factual truth of the survivors' stories, and the difficult decision to allow skeptic anthropologists and psychiatrists to propose alternative points of view in the yearly Chicago conferences on MPD was made, much to the disappointment of militant survivors' organizations such as *Voices in Action* and others [35]. In 1994-1995 two official reports sponsored by the U.K. [36] and the U.S. [37] governments concluded that no large satanic conspiracy existed and the large majority of survivors'

stories were not factually true, although in a few cases abusers may have tried to terrorize children by referring to the Devil or Satanism. These abusers, however, were not connected to international networks of Satanists, secret or otherwise. It may be expected that the reports will cause a decline — and, eventually, a marginalization — of the Satanism scares of the 1980, largely based on survivors' stories.

II. Vampirology and the Satanism Scares

1. Pre-Classic Vampirology, 1706-1787

Modern scholarship has made abundantly clear that the vampire scares in Eastern Europe (circa 1672-1772) occurred independently from any Western European Satanism scare, based on local folklore and

legends. The reception of the Eastern incidents in the West is, however, another matter. Historian Michel de Certeau has noted that Satanism scares are different from earlier witchcraft scares and are a typical modern phenomenon. The widespread social alarm following the French incidents at the Court of Louis XIV (and early possession cases in the 17th century) could hardly be explained without taking into account the growing importance of the press, particularly in the form of dozens of pamphlets, but including early weekly and monthly journals and gazettes [38]. The press kept alive for decades incidents that, in earlier times, would have been forgotten in a few years. It is in the climate created by the countless printed accounts of the first proto-satanic cult operated by Madame La Voisin at the Court of Louis XIV that the most quoted book on vampires in the 18th century reached Western Europe. *Magia Posthuma*, by Charles Ferdinand de Schertz, published in 1706, related a number of vampire stories from Bohemia and Moravia and, though discounting exaggerations, considered them

mostly believable. As a lawyer, Schertz advised against desecrating bodies without a previous regular process before a court of law, involving expert advice by doctors and theologians. Burning bodies of suspected vampires should not be left to ignorant peasants, but should be carried out by legitimate authorities pursuant to a due decision by a court of law [39]. That Schertz was taken seriously in countries like Italy, Germany and France — and was still quoted as an authoritative source well into the 19th century — could only have happened within the general frame of the Satanism scare created by the La Voisin investigation and its widespread publicity through the press. Evidence that Schertz's reports were widely believed, including by scholars, is also offered by refutations produced by skeptics. Perhaps the most famous of the refutations of Schertz is included in the forty-sixth volume of the huge *Universal-Lexicon* published between 1732-1754 in Leipzig by Johann Heinrich Zedler. Zedler quotes the incidents mentioned by Schertz and other famous stories — including Peter Plogojovitz's — and concludes that vampire scares are due to epidemics of psychiatric illnesses and are mere dreams by peasant populations. The quality of the soil in certain regions of Eastern Europe explains why some buried bodies are found apparently "intact" after months or years. There is, at any rate, nothing mysterious about vampires, and psychiatrists could easily dispose of the related stories. "When we could find a natural explanation for an incident — Zedler concludes — we should stay with this explanation without resorting to spirits or occult qualities" [40]. Anti-Schertz skeptics also existed within the Roman Catholic Church. In Italy monsignor Giuseppe Davanzati (1665-1755) archbishop of Trani, wrote in 1743 his *Dissertazione sopra i vampiri*, denying that vampires existed at all and contradicting the opinion of cardinal Schtattembach, the bishop of Olmutz who in a conversation with the Italian archbishop had typically used Schertz's arguments. Davanzati's refutation circulated widely in a manuscript form, but apparently was not published before 1774 [41]. Most importantly, in 1743 Davanzati's work had been approved in a widely publicized letter by Pope Benedict XIV, who is regarded to this day as an authority in matters of miracles and prodigies, both divine and diabolical, in the Catholic Church. Benedict XIV later returned to the vampire question, branding as superstitious the Eastern European bishops who believed in the reality of the phenomena. He even suggested, in a letter to the Polish archbishop of Leopold, that "possibly there are priests who support belief in

vampires in order to obtain from gullible peasants the payment of exorcisms and Masses" [42].

It is commonly argued that belief in the reality of vampires in the 18th century was supported by the famous Dissertation by Benedictine scholar Dom Augustin Calmet (1672-1757). Most of those criticizing Calmet — including some of his contemporaries — probably did not read carefully his book and trusted the ironic remarks of Voltaire, who — on the other hand — had been the guest of Calmet in his abbey of Senones and held the Benedictine in some regard for his prodigious erudition in historical and theological matters. It is true that Calmet, in his 1746 book, amassed in an apparently uncritical way reports of vampire incidents from all over Eastern Europe and became the source of all modern vampirology. On the other hand, recent scholarship tends to regard Calmet, based on his correspondence with a number of fellow Catholic scholars and priests, as much more skeptical than is usually believed. Since a number of passages in his 1746 book were ambiguous, they were corrected in the second edition, of 1751, where Calmet concludes that he does believe that some corpses may be "conserved" (perhaps because they were buried when the subject was only apparently dead) but he does not believe in vampirism in the usual sense of the term. As we shall see, in the 19th century Calmet will be accused by Catholic demonologists of being a skeptical Enlightenment philosopher in disguise. Italian scholar Nadia Minerva — in a study of the Satanism scares in the 18th century — has concluded that Calmet was neither a skeptic in disguise (if he did not believe in vampires, he did believe firmly in a number of other diabolical manifestations), nor the gullible true believer depicted by Voltaire. He tried a "middle way" that he called the "voie raisonnable" ("reasonable way"), arguing that some phenomena were perhaps true but most were not. His peculiar literary style of repeating first all the vampire stories as if they were actually true, then criticizing them in later chapters of the book, maintained however an ambiguity in the whole exercise. Sociologically, Calmet — whatever his ultimate personal opinions — thus played the role of a believer and helped many demonologists, particularly in the subsequent century, to argue that vampires did indeed exist [43]. In the 18th century itself vampire scares were halted by Empress Maria Theresa of Austria in 1753 following an investigation by his Court doctor, Gerhard van Swieten (1700-1772). The investigation — which regarded belief in vampirism as mere superstition — was written in French

and German in 1755 and published in his final version in Augsburg in 1768 [44]. Van Swieten was an Enlightenment skeptic [45], but his work was well received by the Vatican and eventually translated into Italian in 1787 with a title explicitly referring to Schertz's *Magia Posthuma* [46]. This Vatican-approved edition of van Swieten's skeptical report marks the end of pre-classic vampirology, originating with Schertz's book in 1706. In a parallel development, the Satanism scare generated by the first satanic incidents of late 17th century was losing momentum between 1750-1790. As we mentioned earlier, it was revived by Catholic authors who suspected a Satanist conspiracy behind the French Revolution.

2. Classic Vampirology, 1819-

1897

As we mentioned earlier, Catholic demonology in the 19th century tried to explain through the action of Satanists — and, ultimately, of the Devil himself — two apparently inexplicable historical events which had taken Catholics by surprise: the French Revolution, and the rise of Spiritualism. Most treatises on demonology in France — the most prolific country in this field — start in the 19th century with a discussion of the theories of German theologian Johann Joseph von Görres (1776-1848). Görres, a Protestant professor at Munich University, had converted to Roman Catholicism in 1819. His interest in vampires was introduced into the Roman Catholic Church through his conversion, and we can date classic vampirology from this 1819 event. Ironically — while some modern authors regard Görres as gullible and too ready to conclude that demonic influences are at work [47] — in France throughout the 19th century Görres was widely criticized for being too skeptical. In fact, in his seminal work *Die Christliche Mystik* [48], Görres distinguishes between three types of mysticism: divine, natural, and satanic. For his time, the German theologian is not too generous in classifying phenomena into either the divine or satanic categories: most are explained as "natural", by resort — if necessary — to dubious theories such as animal magnetism or mesmerism. The famous section on vampires in Görres' magnum opus is a good example of his theories. Vampirism is indeed discussed within the context of "natural mysticism", i.e. extraordinary phenomena which are neither divine nor satanic in origin. Görres starts with a discussion of the most famous cases and vampirism scares in Eastern

Europe, including the case of Peter Plogojowitz. Not surprisingly, he discusses at length Schertz's *Magia Posthuma* and reports some of the most curious stories from Calmet. Görres' explanation of these incidents is entirely natural, but — as elsewhere in his work — he often makes use of contemporary pseudoscience. In the bodies of the so-called vampires the soul has been separated by the body, and there is no real "human life" left. There could be, however, still a "vital principle", a "vegetal life" still present in the blood that prevented the corruption of the body. This "vegetal life" is enough to explain why bodies of the alleged vampires are found full of blood, and Görres offers comparisons with illnesses where abnormal quantities of blood are expelled from the body. A corpse maintaining a "vegetal life" is, according to Görres, a rare thing; unfortunately, it is also dangerous. The presence of such corpses, even deeply buried, causes an "influx on the living humans" in a comparatively large area around the cemetery. Those under the "influx" of these bodies slowly "lose life", develop an illness "without fever" and die. This illness is also accompanied by "hallucinations" where a victim "believes" to be attacked and to have his or her blood sucked; hence the vampire stories. When the victims of the "vampire" — in fact a corpse maintaining a "vegetal life" — die, their body easily in turn maintains the "vegetal life" and becomes another "vampire". The only remedy is to burn these corpses and "the common people, with its common sense, has developed a better view of this problem than scholars with their skeptical mind" [49]. Görres, thus, does not deny that people could actually die because of the "vampires", but prefers a natural explanation — although based on the dubious theory of "vegetal life" — without involving the Devil.

The French demonology of the 1850s and 1860s — confronted, mostly, with Spiritualism — discussed at length Görres' theories but normally criticized the German theologian for not giving the Devil his due. The two most important demonologists of these decades are marquis Jules Eudes de Mirville (1802-1873) and one-time ambassador Henri-Roger Gougenot des Mousseaux (1805-1876), mostly remembered today for his anti-Jewish tirades but well-known also as a demonologist in his time. Their theories were summarized by Joseph Bizouard, whom we have already mentioned. In the United States, Orestes Brownson frankly recognized his debt to Mirville in matters diabolical. Mirville discusses vampires in the fourth volume of the definitive edition of his *Pneumatologie*. Mirville's discussion is a

summary of the well-known Eastern European incidents and a criticism of doctor Calmeil, a psychiatrist who had regarded vampire stories as mere hallucinations. Mirville remarks that it would not be a great comfort for victims of vampirism to hear that, according to the learned psychiatrist, they have been killed by mere "hallucinations". His discussion of vampirism is, however, somewhat inconclusive. Mirville does not accept "natural" theories but remains uncertain whether vampire bodies are possessed by the souls of the damned (perhaps the same souls once attached to that body, according to Eastern European popular belief) or by the Devil himself [50]. Gougenot des Mousseaux resolves the problem in 1864 without hesitation. As usual, he takes most of his fact from Schertz, and, like his friend Mirville, criticizes the medical theory of hallucination of doctor Calmeil. He ruthlessly attacks Calmet as a skeptic disguised as a believer. He also criticizes the theory of a French spiritist, M. Piérart, who thinks that vampires are simply poor people buried when still living, in a "cataleptic state", projecting their astral bodies to take the blood they need in order to survive. Gougenot dismisses Piérart's theory as based on the unproved existence of the astral body. Quoting Kabalistic authors he was familiar with as an anti-Jewish polemist, Gougenot gives his solution. The Catholic Church accepts as a well-established fact that the body of a living human being could be possessed by the Devil. There is no reason to doubt that the Devil could also possess the body of a dead person and "animate a corpse". A corpse possessed by a Demon becomes easily "homicidal" as the Devil has a "homicidal and revolutionary nature". "Blood, blood! This is their better cry; all Devils are vampiric, and why? Because they are the Homicide Spirits of the abyss" [51].

After these scholarly precedents, it is surprising that the Taxil hoax does not devote to vampirism more than a few pages. Taxil and his co-conspirator doctor Hacks (alias doctor Bataille) were not particularly concerned with Eastern European tales, but rather with living human beings killing people and drinking blood under the influence of Satan. In the second volume of *Le Diable au XIXe siècle* we meet one such vampire, a "Hindo-African of the Mauritius Islands", allegedly executed on December 12, 1892 for having "vampirized" a young girl, sucking her blood from her neck and killing her in the process. For Bataille this individual, called Dianh, was obviously "in frequent relations with Lucifer". Other examples are given and the message is that vampires, rather than corpses animated by

the Devil, are criminal human beings who drink blood and kill people because they are part of a huge Satanist conspiracy [52]. Bataille, here, takes into account a new medical literature describing "clinical vampirism" as a compulsion to drink blood leading to the attacking and eventually killing of human beings. 1892, the year when the publication of *Le Diable* was started, was also the year of the English translation of *Psychopathia Sexualis*, first published in German by psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing (1840 — 1902), which contains a number of stories of clinical vampirism [53]. It is a well-known fact that Krafft-Ebing's work inspired the character of Renfield in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, first published in 1897. The Count himself, on the other hand, is still — in Stoker's novel — a rather "Catholic" vampire, duly impressed by Catholic prayers and consecrated hosts. The publication of *Dracula* in 1897 marks at the same time the triumph and the demise of classic vampirology. Clinical vampirism, as studied by psychiatrists and reduced to a purely secular and medicalized phenomenon, will surface again in the Satanism scares of our century.

3. Modern Vampirology, 1897-

1980: The Secularization of

the Vampire

The history of clinical vampirism has been documented in 1992 by Richard Noll. Clinical vampirism has been described repeatedly by a number of 20th century psychiatrists, and Noll proposes to rename it "Renfield's syndrome in honor of the character in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*". The progression of "Renfield's syndrome" is outlined by Noll as follows:

"1. A pivotal event often leads to the development of vampirism (blood drinking). This usually occurs in childhood, and the experience of bleeding or the taste of blood is found to be 'exciting'. After puberty, this excitement associated with blood is experienced as sexual arousal.

2. The progression of Renfield's syndrome follows a typical course in many cases:

Autovampirism is generally developed first, usually in childhood, by initially self-inducing scrapes or cuts in the skin to produce blood, which is then ingested, to later learning how to open major blood vessels (veins, arteries) in order to drink a steady stream of warm blood more directly. The blood may then be ingested at the time of

the opening, or may be saved in jars or other containers for later imbibing or for other reasons. Masturbation often accompanies autovampiristic practices.

Zoophagia (literally the eating of living creatures, but more specifically the drinking of their blood) may develop prior to auto-vampirism in some cases, but usually is next to develop. Persons with Renfield's syndrome may themselves catch and eat or drink the blood of living creatures such as insects, cats, dogs, or birds. The blood of other species may be obtained at places such as slaughterhouses and then ingested. Sexual activity may or may not accompany these functions.

Vampirism in its true form is the next stage to develop — procuring and drinking the blood of living human beings. This may be done by stealing blood from hospitals, laboratories, and so forth, or by attempting to drink the blood directly from others. Usually this involves some sort of consensual sexual activity,

but in lust-murder type cases and in other nonlethal violent crimes, the sexual activity and vampirism may not be consensual.

3. The compulsion to drink blood almost always has a strong sexual component associated with it.

4. Blood will sometimes take on an almost mystical significance as a sexualized symbol of life or power, and, as such, an experience of well being or empowerment will be reported by those with Renfield's syndrome following such activities.

5. Persons with Renfield's syndrome are primarily male.

6. The defining characteristic of Renfield's syndrome is the blood-drinking compulsion. Other related activities such as necrophilia and necrophagia that do not have as their goal the drinking of blood are not to be considered aspects of this disorder". [54]

Noll chronicles the history of a different kind of vampirology, no longer the province of the exorcist or the demonologist but of the psychiatrist. Modern vampirology starts after the publication of *Dracula* in 1897 and covers almost a century. From 1897 to 1980 psychiatric descriptions of clinical vampires are not scarce (although the disease is by no means widespread), while Catholic and protestant treatises on the Devil almost always ignore vampires, and no hint of a ritualistic or religious vampirism surfaces. Interestingly enough, Noll is among the skeptics about the recent Satanism scare and survivors' stories. Although sympathetic towards religious people involved in exorcism, often unfairly harassed by secular psychiatrists [55], Noll does not believe in

the existence of the Devil — nor, for that matter, in the supernatural origins of Christianity [56]. Ironically, however, Noll's collection of medical evidence for clinical vampirism has been quoted by both secular anti-Satanists and evangelical counter-Satanists in the recent scare.

4. Post-Modern Vampirology,

1980-1995

After the publication of *Michelle Remembers* in 1980, the interest in ritualistic abuse has caused, as we have mentioned, the largest Satanism scare in our century. Within the framework of this scare we have witnessed a renewed interest in vampires, and a new vampirology has emerged. Although the interest is still concentrated on living human vampires rather than on the undead, vampirism is again examined within the context of a ritual and of black magic. Small vampire-based new religious movements do exist, such as the Temple of the Vampire (with "i") based in Lacey, Washington and the Order of the Vampyre (with "y") within one of the largest contemporary Satanist groups, Michael Aquino's Temple of Set. Some of these organizations only practice a metaphorical vampirism, while in others members ritually suck blood from each other (normally not from the neck — the exercise could be practiced in a non-dangerous way but is painful — but also, less romantically, from a finger pierced by a surgical needle). Survivors have however told therapists much wilder stories. A number of survivors have reported having been attacked during satanic ceremonies by Satanists drinking blood from their necks [57]. If one believes — as I have argued elsewhere [58] — that survivors' stories are socially constructed narratives influenced by prevailing cultural trends, it could be easily argued that blood-drinking incidents have recently surfaced in survivors' accounts due to the renewed popularity of vampires in the American movie industry. It could not be excluded that recent scholarly studies of vampires [59] may have in turn influenced some therapists. It is, at any rate, clear that in such secular anti-satanic literature vampires are not corpses animated by the Devil or immortal beings. They are common human beings — or perhaps uncommon, in the sense of being criminal Satanists. In 1991 *Cosmopolitan* reporter Carol Page published a successful collection of interviews with such individuals, "real vampires", where she even proclaimed that we are living today in the "age of vam-

pirism" [60]. This is, in part, still a secularized vampirism, the province of the psychiatrist rather than the exorcist. The ritualistic context, on the other hand, introduces a new, post-modern element with respect to the modern, medical phase of vampirology. Noll's study, additionally, is also quoted by Evangelical counter-Satanists who would happily add that these disturbed individuals are clearly inspired by the Devil himself.

Perhaps the most extraordinary work of this literature is *Lucifer Dethroned*, published in 1993 by counter-cult activist William Schnoebelen along with his wife Sharon [61]. Schnoebelen is himself an interesting character. After a short passage in the Mormon Church — where he made a living as a convert claiming (falsely, as it turned out) to be a former Roman Catholic priest (he had been, in fact, a priest in a small splinter group not associated with the Church of Rome) — Schnoebelen converted to Evangelical Christianity and started a career in professional counter-cultism claiming to be almost an ex-everything: ex-Catholic priest, ex-Mormon, but also ex-witch, ex-Satanist, ex-Freemason, in increasingly lurid accounts. Most of his books have been published by the notorious Chick Publications of Chino (California), well known for its extreme anti-Catholicism [62]. Schnoebelen, thus, has emerged as an interesting figure and moral entrepreneur in modern professional counter-cultism [63]. Not surprisingly, after Hollywood renewed interest in vampires and the success of Anne Rice's novels, Schnoebelen has claimed to be also an ex-vampire. The back cover of his *Lucifer Dethroned* proclaims a moral tale: "If Schnoebelen, crazed by blood lust and headed for murder, could be changed by Jesus Christ, ANYONE can!" (emphasis in original). Schnoebelen relates how, having descended into all the degrees of occultism and Satanism, he discovered the "final piece of the puzzle". The ultimate occultism is "VAMPIRISM!" (emphasis in original). Schnoebelen — who has really been for a while a bishop in the Chicago-based occultist Michael Bertiaux's Gnostic Church — claims that "the inner rings" of his organization (not named in the book) "were involved with Thelema, the religion of Aleister Crowley. Among these innermost rings were certain select women who were consecrated, dedicated, willing — even delighted to let me drink their blood. With enough women to choose from, no one woman would lose enough blood to become seriously threatened. They enjoyed the experience, and I was sustained. Thus, I did not have to go outside our rings to prey upon women for their blood — at first...". Schnoebelen blames Hollywood for having

sold to him, with the "Dracula" movies, "the lie of eternal youth and eternal beauty (...). I know, because I bought that lie — hook, line and fang". "The vampire cult", according to Schnoebelen, is "the last and most damnable step in [the] exploration of Satanism". Catholicism, as usual in Schnoebelen's books, is also to be blamed, for his Eucharistic ritual of drinking the blood of Jesus may be propedeutic for Satanists to drinking human blood. Schnoebelen describes a "Mass of St. Vlad", supposedly celebrated in his cult in honor of Dracula. "Special sacramental rum was used instead of the traditional red wine. It was essentially similar to the Orthodox liturgy, except for obvious differences". One of the "priestesses" was involved. "First, I would drink from her neck until she nearly fainted from loss of blood. Then, I would open up my own chest and [the priestess] would drink deeply from my blood. This supposedly transmitted the foreign, demonic 'enzyme' into her body which began transforming her into a priestess of the Nosferatu. The mass would then conclude with setting the sacramental liquor (supposedly transubstantiated into the blood of Dracula himself) aflame. We would call upon Vlad to come and smile upon the creation of this new 'child' of his." One day Schnoebelen "almost went too far with one of the priestesses. Remarkably, she was enjoying it no end, but I lost control and drunk so much of her blood that she became unconscious". Happily, the priestess did not die but we see Schnoebelen wandering at midnight in Milwaukee watching "the occasional prostitute" and trying desperately to control his "animal urge to wait until she was alone and pull her down the way a lion would attack a gazelle". The good Christian reader is thus led to climax of the story, followed by an immediate anticlimax: "It was at this desperate time that the Lord Jesus Christ entered my life (...) Jesus can save to the uttermost even someone as horrendous and wretched as I had become!" [64]. It is, of course, not impossible that Schnoebelen may have met some "clinical vampires" — or someone claiming to be a "clinical vampire" — in the occult subculture. Schnoebelen, however, has invented so many incidents that could not conceivably have happened [65] that one is not inclined to believe his vampire stories. The Dracula mass as initiation on how to become a good vampire is too similar to Anne Rice's Lestat stories about vampire initiation. Schnoebelen, however, is still very much in demand as a speaker in the Evangelical-Fundamentalist counter-cult circuit, and his book offers to counter-Satanists the possibility of integrating vam-



pires into their view of a Satanist conspiracy.

The Dracula mass may never have been celebrated in Milwaukee (although, as we mentioned earlier, simpler vampire rituals do exist in the contemporary occult subculture), but these incidents confirm that vampires do indeed reemerge in any Satanism scare. Since Satanism scares are never very long, but periodically resurface in history, the stories told by survivors to psychiatrists and by Schnobelen to his Evangelical Christian readers may not be the final chapter on tales about "real" vampires. Denis Buican in a controversial book which includes references to possible political analogies, claims that Dracula has become a archetype, where, "in the same will to preserve a malignant power and a threatened life, those who lose their blood and those who drink it are somewhat confused" [66]. The vampire is, at the same time, an image of evil and an image of how unsure we moderns have become about the origin of evil.

As usual, post-modernity is not a mere return to pre-modern models. In this perspective — and contrary to many reviews of the movie version of "Interview with the Vampire" as superficial (and perhaps not politically correct) — Anne Rice's saga is highly significant. Lestat's quest is above all about the origins of the vampire and, at the same time, about the origins of the universe, of evil, of God. In her fourth novel of the vampire cycle, *The Tale of the Body Thief*, a friend of Lestat, the occult scholar David Talbot (later to become a vampire himself), relates a vision he had in a Paris café of God and the Devil arguing with each other. David's theory is that God is not pure spirit, "has a body" and "has made many mistakes". "The Devil became the Devil because he tried to warn God". According to Talbot, there may be more than one Devil. Each Devil may change his mind or grow tired of the job, and be eventually substituted [67]. Anne Rice has argued that Talbot's theory is "very much on my mind, the idea that the Devil learns and changes. How do they get him to keep the job? That's what this book is all about. It's about Lestat learning and changing, and not really wanting to be the Devil" [68]. Still, it is a demon, Amel, who in Rice's saga creates the first vampire Akasha, around 4,000 B.C. in Egypt. Akasha then plays a significant role in Lestat's story [69]. Vampires and the Devil, thus, are connected, although vampires are also curious about the Devil and unhappy that they do not know enough about him and the universe. This could not be the end of the story, at least in Rice's terms, as we see in her further vampire

novel, *Memnoch the Devil*, where Lestat finally meets the Devil himself and confronts the whole Christian worldview [70]. A similar post-modern vampire is Saint-Germain, created by Chelsea Quinn Yarbro: like Lestat (and unlike Stoker's Dracula) he is not stopped by the symbols of Christianity, while on the other hand he is knowledgeable in the occult sciences and carries the name of a famous 18th century occultist. It is, on the other hand, unlikely that Anne Rice, Chelsea Quinn Yarbro — or anyone else — will have the final word on the relationship between God, the Devil, Satanism, and vampires. Perhaps the World Dracula Congress of 1995 will be remembered as the end of a phase of vampirology and the beginning of further developments. At any rate, as archetypes now deeply encoded in the human soul vampires are so powerful that, like the poor of the Gospel, they will likely remain with us until the end of the world.

Notes

1. Jeffrey S. Victor, *Satanic Panic: The Creation of a Contemporary Legend* (Chicago and La Salle: Open Court, 1993), pp.1-2.

2. See François Ravaissin-Mollien, *Archives de la Bastille: Documents inédits*, 19 vols. (Paris: A. Durand et Pedone-Lauriel, 1866 — 1904). See vol. 6 (1873) and vol. 7 (1874).

3. The most influential works include: Jean-Baptiste Fiard, *La France trompée par les magiciens et démonolâtres du XVIIIe siècle, fait démontré par les faits* (Paris: Grégoire, 1803); [Jules] Eudes de Mirville, *Pneumatologie*, 10 vols., (Paris: Vrayet de Surcy, Delaroque et Wattelier, 1853-1868); Henri-Roger Gougenot des Mousseaux, *Moeurs et pratiques des Démons ou des esprits visiteurs du spiritisme ancien et moderne* (Paris: Plon, 1865); and Joseph Bizouard, *Des Rapports de l'homme avec le Démon: Essai historique et philosophique*, 6 vols. (Paris: Gaume Frères et J. Duprey, 1864).

4. See Orestes Brownson, *The Spirit-Rapper: An Autobiography* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company and London: Charles Dolman, 1854), pp.164-167; Brownson's book was translated into French as *L'Esprit frappeur: Scènes du Monde Invisible* (Paris and Tournai: H.Casterman, 1862) — see p.103 for the reference to the Book of Mormon).

5. Bizouard, *Des Rapports de l'homme avec le Démon*, vol. VI, pp.111-127.

6. Joris-Karl Huysmans, *Là-bas* (Paris: Tresse et Stock, 1891). See also Jules Bois, *Le Satanisme et la magie* (Paris: Léon Chailley, 1895).

7. See Richard Griffiths, *The Reactionary Revolution: The Catholic Revival in French Literature 1870-1914* (London: Constable, 1966), pp.124-125.

8. Dr. Bataille, *Le Diable au XIXe siècle*, 2 vols. (Paris and Lyon: Delhomme et Briguet, 1892-1894).

9. See Bataille, *Le Diable*, vol. 1.

10. See A.E. Waite, *Devil Worship in France or the Question of Lucifer* (London: George Redway, 1896). In 1897-1898 Waite wrote an interesting sequel to this book, *Diana Vaughan and the Question of Modern Palladism: A Sequel to "Devil Worship in France"*, which has remained unpublished and is at present in a private collection in England.

11. Taxil's confession was published in the anti-Catholic magazine *Le Frondeur* (April 25, 1897). A good treatment of the Taxil incident is Eugen Weber (ed.), *Satan Franc-maçon. La mystification de Léo Taxil* (Paris: Julliard, 1964). After Weber's book a number of new documents have surfaced and are discussed in my *Il ritorno del Diavolo: Satanisti e antisatanisti dal Seicento ai nostri giorni* (Milan: Mondadori, 1994).

12. See Clotilde Bersone, *L'Élu du Dragon* (Paris: L'Étincelle, 1929). The book is kept in print to this day by anti-Masonic groups in various languages.

13. See Marc Pluquet, *La Sophiale, Maria de Naglowska: sa vie, son oeuvre* (Paris: self-published, n.d.); Alexandrian, *Les Libérateurs de l'amour* (Paris: Seuil, 1978), pp.185-206.

14. For Crowley's non-belief in the existence of the Devil (or of God), see Aleister Crowley, *Magick*, edited by John Symonds and Kenneth Grant, (York Beach,

Maine: Samuel Weiser, 1973), p. 296. For a discussion see my *Il cappello del mago: I nuovi movimenti magici dallo spiritismo al satanismo* (Milan: SugarCo, 1990), pp. 268-279.

15. See David G.Bromley and Susan G.Ainsley, "Satanism and Satanic Churches: The Contemporary Incarnations", in Timothy Miller (ed.), *America's Alternative Religions* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994).

16. See Robert N. Bellah and Frederick E. Greenspahn (eds.), *Uncivil Religion: Interreligious Hostility in America* (New York: Crossroad, 1987); David Brion Davis, "Some Themes of Counter-Subversion: An Analysis of Anti-Masonic, Anti-Catholic, and Anti-Mormon Literature", *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 47 (1960), pp. 205-224.

17. See my "Strange Bedfellows or Future Enemies?", *Update & Dialog* 3 (October 1993), pp. 13-22.

18. See Barbara Hargrove, "Social Sources and Consequences of the Brainwashing Controversy", in David G. Bromley and James T. Richardson (eds.), *The Brainwashing/Deprogramming Controversy: Sociological, Psychological, Legal and Historical Perspectives* (New York: Edwin Mellen, 1983), pp. 299-308 (p. 303).

19. For more details, see my "Strange Bedfellows".

20. See my "The Devil Makers: Contemporary Evangelical Fundamentalist Anti-Mormonism", *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 27:1 (Spring 1994), pp. 153-169.

21. See Sigmund Freud, with Josef Breuer, "On the Psychical Mechanism of Hysterical Phenomena", in

Collected Papers, vol.1 (London: International Psychoanalytic Press, 1924).

22. Michelle Smith and Lawrence Pazder, *Michelle Remembers* (New York: Congdon & Lattés, 1980).

23. For these developments see Sherril Mulhern, "The Demonization of Psychopathology", in Jean-Baptiste Martin and Massimo Introvigne (eds.), *Le Défi magique. II. Satanisme, sorcellerie* (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1994), pp. 53-73.

24. For a story of the trial from a skeptical point of view, see Paul and Shirley Eberle, *The Abuse of Innocence: The McMartin Preschool Trial* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1993).

25. See Victor, *Satanic Panic*, p.109.

26. For the anti-Satanists' list, widely circulated (including in Utah) by Cavalcade Productions, a producer of anti-Satanist videos based in Ukiah, California, see Craig Lockwood, *Other Altars: Roots of Cultic and Satanic Ritual Abuse and Multiple Personality Disorder* (Minneapolis: CompCare Publishers, 1993), pp. 269-271.

27. The most balanced treatment of adolescent Satanism has been written by a Presbyterian pastor who is also a clinical social worker specializing in assisting teenagers with problems: Joyce Mercer, *Behind the Mask of Adolescent Satanism* (Minneapolis: Deaconess Press, 1991).

28. See Victor, *Satanic Panic*; David G. Bromley, "The Social Construction of Subversion: A Comparison of Anti-Religious and Anti-Satanic Cult Narratives", in Anson D. Shupe and David G. Bromley (eds.), *Anti-Cult Movements in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (New York and London: Garland, 1994), pp. 49-75.

29. CSER, *Satanism in America* (Buffalo: CSER, 1989).

30. See John and Mark Sandford, *A Comprehensive Guide to Deliverance and Inner Healing* (Grand Rapids: Chosen Books, 1991). Whether or not inner healing is an acceptable form of prayer has been the subject of considerable debate in Catholic charismatic circles. See "Two Views of Inner Healing", *New Covenant* 23:7 (February 1994), pp. 7-10.

31. Bob and Gretchen Passantino, "The Hard Facts about Satanic Ritual Abuse", *Christian Research Journal* 14:3 (Winter 1992), pp. 20-23, 32-34.

32. Robin Perrin and Less Parrott III, "Memories of Satanic Ritual Abuse: The Truth Behind the Panic", *Christianity Today* (June 21, 1993), pp. 19-23.

33. Susan Bergman, "Rumors from Hell", *Christianity Today* (March 7, 1994), pp. 36-37.

34. James T. Richardson, Joel Best, and David G. Bromley (eds.), *The Satanism Scare* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1991).

35. See Lockwood, *Other Altars*, pp.13-15.

36. J.S. LaFontaine, *The Extent and Nature of Organized and Ritual Abuse* (London: Her Majesty Stationery's Office, 1994).

37. See *New York Times* (October 31, 1994); *Religion Watch* 10 (November 1994), p. 7.

38. See Michel de Certeau, *La Possession de Loudun*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Gallimard-Julliard, 1990).

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43. See Nadia Minerva, *Il Diavolo: eclissi e metaformosi nel secolo dei Lumi*. Da Asmodeo a Belzebù (Ravenna: Longo 1990), pp. 113-151.

44. Gerhard van Swieten, *Vampirismus* (Augsburg, 1768).

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55. See Richard Noll, "Exorcism and Possession:

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57. See Victor, *Satanic Panic*, for a number of such stories.

58. See my *Indagine sul Satanismo*.

59. See, for example, Paul Barber, *Vampires, Burial and Death: Folklore and Reality* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988).

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63. See on Schnoebelen my "Quand le Diable se fait Mormon. Le Mormonisme comme complot diabolique: l'affaire Schnoebelen", *Politica Hermetica* 6 (1992),

pp. 36-54; and "The Devil Makers".

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66. Denis Buican, *Les Métamorphoses de Dracula: L'histoire et la légende* (Paris: Éditions du Felin, 1993), p. 9. For the larger context see Antoine Faivre (ed.), *Colloque de Cerisy: Les Vampires* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1993).

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For more on vampires, culture, and religion, consult the direct link to the CESNUR Library's large special collection on vampires, book reviews, scholarly articles and more.

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Integrity and Suspicion in NRM Research

by Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi

In early May 1995, as Japanese law-enforcement authorities were collecting evidence linking the Aum Shinrikyo NRM [New Religious Movement] to the March 20 poison gas attack which killed 13 commuters, and preparing what they thought was a strong case, they discovered, to their utter surprise, that they were under attack from an unexpected direction. According to media reports, four Americans arrived in Tokyo to defend Aum Shinrikyo against charges of mass terrorism. Two of them were NRM scholars. According to these reports, they stated that Aum Shinrikyo could not have produced the gas used in the attack, and called on Japanese police not to "crush a religion and deny freedom" (Reid, 1995; Reader, 1995).

Reliable reports since 1995 have shown that Japanese authorities were actually not just overly cautious, but negligent and deferential, if not protective, regarding criminal activities by Aum, because of its status as an NRM. "Some observers wonder what took the Japanese authorities so long to take decisive action. It seems apparent that enough serious concerns had been raised about various Aum activities to warrant a more serious police inquiry prior to the subway gas attack" (Mullins, 1997, p. 321). The group can only be described as extremely violent and murderous. "Thirty-three Aum followers are believed to have been killed between...1988 and ...1995...Another twenty-one followers have been reported missing [and presumed dead]" (Mullins, 1997, p. 320). Among non-members, there have been 24 murder victims. One triple murder case in 1989 and another poison gas attack in 1994 which killed seven have been committed by the group, as well as less serious crimes which the police were not too eager to investigate (Beit-Hallahmi, 1998; Haworth, 1995; Mullins, 1997). So it is safe to conclude that religious freedom was not the issue in this case. Nor is it likely, as some Aum apologists among NRM scholars have claimed, that this lethal record (77 deaths on numerous occasions over seven years) and other non-lethal criminal activities were the deeds of a few rogue leaders. Numerous individuals must have been involved in, and numer-

ous others aware of, these activities.

Some NRM scholars have suggested that the trip to Japan, as reported in the media, caused the field an image problem (Reader, 1995). Let me make clear right away that my concern here is not with images, but with the reality of scholarship. I am afraid that in this case, as in many others, the reality may be actually worse than the image. How do we react to the Aum episode? Do we raise our eyebrows? Do we shrug our shoulders? Is it just an isolated case of bad judgment? Are we shocked by the alleged involvement of NRM researchers in this tragic story? Given the climate and culture of the NRM research community, and earlier demonstrations of support for NRMs in trouble, we are not completely surprised. Much of the discourse in NRM research over the past 20 years has been marked by a happy consensus on the question of the relations between NRMs and their social environment.

What should be the proper and desirable relationship between scholars and the groups they study? Naturally, this relationship must be problematic, marked by tension on both sides. No one likes to be under scrutiny of any kind, and we are all sensitive to the self-serving ways in which humans, scholars included, present themselves to others. A critical attitude and an interpretive bent are the marks of the scholar, who is unlikely to take messages from the subjects of his study at face value. Credibility must be negotiated and earned by both informants and scholars, and what is at issue here is the credibility of NRM research.

All of us, as religion scholars and members of the academic community, have our biases (Beit-Hallahmi, 1989; Robbins, 1983). Our differing ideological commitments do not prevent us from communicating and collaborating as colleagues. Scholars are expected to be sophisticated consumers of their colleagues' work. They detect error, bias, and oversight, and separate valuable gold nuggets from slag. In the study of religion, bias and religious commitments should not necessarily undermine scholarship; they may only set its limits (Beit-Hallahmi, 1989, 1996). Our conflicting biases should naturally lead to debates and controversy. It is indeed baffling when we experience in a particular research network the strange, deafening, silence of conformity. The level of conformity to the reigning consensus has been remarkable. Scholars in perfect agreement around a thorny issue are like the dog that didn't bark. They should make us curious, if not outright suspicious.

Origins of the Party Line

Something like a party line has developed among NRM scholars about the way NRMs are described and analyzed. This consensus is responsible for a new conformity which seems to put strict limits on researchers' curiosity. This it has also led to advocacy, and in the cases of Aum Shinrikyo and David Koresh, public expressions of support for an NRM in conflict with its environment. NRM researchers engaged in advocacy are expressing a feeling and a reality of partnership and collaboration with NRMs in a common cultural struggle.

Over the past 20 years, the NRM research community displayed a general agreement on a hierarchy of credibility (Becker, 1967), according to which self presentation by NRMs was epistemologically and logically superior to all outside accounts and observations. The party line has been that "...defectors are involved in either conscious or unconscious self-serving behavior" (Richardson, 1980, p. 247). (This is presumably unlike the behavior of NRM members and leaders, who are totally and utterly selfless). The NRM research community will give more credence to the claims of NRM members and leaders than to claims by former members, outside observers (e.g. the media), and government officials (especially law-enforcement officials). This has led to a pattern of collaboration with NRMs, reaching its culmination, and logical conclusion, in the Aum episode reported above.

The essence of the consensus has been described in a most elegant way by two leading sociologists of religion: "The pattern of various debates and positions adopted appear to represent something of a consensus that where there is a significant erosion of traditional religious liberties and/or litigation is likely to turn on evidence which conflicts with the prevailing corpus of knowledge represented by the professional societies, individual and collective activism is potentially appropriate" (Robbins & Bromley, 1991, p. 199). This article does not touch on the litigation issue, but only deals briefly with the "religious liberties" advocacy, or "activism".

"Activism": The Consensus in Action

Looking at the history of collaboration with NRMs over the past thirty years takes us from the curious to the bizarre. The consensus started developing back in the 1970s, when some NRMs were fighting for recogni-

tion and legitimacy. The mere fact of being defined as a religion, and recognized as a movement worthy of study, seemed like an achievement for some groups. For other groups, the "religion" label was crucial. As Greil (1996, p. 49) suggested, being considered a religious movement is "a cultural resource over which competing interest groups may vie..." giving "privileges associated in a given society with the religious label". Moreover, "the right to the religious label is a valuable commodity" (Greil, 1996, p. 52). Similarly, Barker (1991, p. 11) noted the "considerable economic advantages to be gained from being defined as a religion". By applying the religion label consistently and generously, NRM scholars provided support that was not forthcoming from any other quarters.

The Unificationists were among the first to appreciate the value of having professors on their side. Since the 1970s, they organized a variety of front organizations and held numerous conferences, best known among them were the Unity of Science conferences. At such conferences, academics from all over the world met to discuss what united them, most obviously the readiness to accept a free vacation, all expenses paid, from the Unification Church. Most academics attending the conferences were not religion scholars. Those who were became aware of their worth in the coin of legitimacy and respectability to the group. There was criticism of academics who were ready to provide recognition to the Unification Church by attending the conferences (Horowitz, 1978), but these critical voices were decisively ignored by NRM scholars. There is red thread that connects the cozy relationship with the Unification Church in the 1970s and the events of the 1990s. This thread does not express itself in the willingness to receive NRM money, but in the clear ideological commitment to defending NRMs regardless of the circumstances and the consequences. It seems that the operative consensus that started forming in the late 1970s was well in place by the early 1980s. Leading scholars in the field decided to take a stand in the propaganda war over the legitimacy and reputation of certain NRMs (or groups claiming to be NRMs, such as Scientology), and to work together with them in order to give them much needed public support. It was felt that in the struggle for legitimacy, anything perceived as harming the NRMs' public image should be avoided. A defensive discourse has grown to protect any seeming indiscretion or transgression.

Fifty years from now, when the archives are opened up and private letters read, future historians will be able to answer bet-

ter the questions raised here and explain the development of the late 20th century consensus among NRM scholars. In the meantime we can work only on the basis of public documents, but from time to time confidential documents see the light of day and provide additional insights. I have before me a piece of evidence which reveals significant collusion between researchers and NRMs. This is a confidential memorandum, dated December 20, 1989, and authored by an NRM researcher, who stated that he was writing on behalf of two other leading researchers, all of them sociologists. Copies of this document have been circulated by an anti-NRM group, and its authenticity is beyond any doubt. It is significant that this document has been sent to a long list of sociologists by email, and has been cited before. It is embarrassing to refer to a confidential memo written by a dear colleague, but no less embarrassing has been the experience of witnessing dear colleagues act as collaborators and shills for a variety of masquerading organizations.

This document reports on a series of meetings and activities involving several NRM scholars, NRM attorneys, NRM leaders, and some other scholars. Many future plans are discussed, most of which never materialized. The agenda and the commitments expressed are very clear. The memo proves beyond a shadow of a doubt, not only behind-the-scenes contacts between scholars and NRMs, but the coordinated effort on the part of leading NRM scholars to work with NRMs. What is striking is the clear sense in which the leading members of the NRM research network regarded NRMs as allies, not subjects of study. It seems that the scholars were more eager than the NRMs to lead the fight for NRM legitimacy.

"Our meetings with the members of the Unification Church confirmed our earlier impressions that ... their response is very substantially confined to ad hoc responses to crises. I pressed them on the question of whether it might be possible for the UC in collaboration with several other NRMs to raise a significant amount of money — no strings attached — to an independent group, which in turn, would entertain proposals and fund research on NRMs". NRMs were less than enthusiastic, the writer thought, and "The cooperative funding of the American Conference on Religious Freedom would appear to be about as far as they are prepared to go at this time" (Confidential, 1989, p. 4). In addition to the idea of creating an NRM-funded research organization, "...we spent a good deal of time considering whether the time might be right to import ...INFORM or create a US

organization that would perform a similar function...INFORM has taken a very significant step in neutralizing anti-cult movements in the UK" (Confidential, 1989, p. 5).

In 1992, The Association of World Academics for Religious Freedom (AWARE) which described itself (Lewis, 1994, p. 94) as "...an information center set up to propagate objective information about non-traditional religions", came on the scene. Each and every NRM scholar undoubtedly considers himself or herself an information center propagating objective information about non-traditional religions, so there must be some really good reasons for the creation of another such center. "The primary goal of AWARE is to promote intellectual and religious freedom by educating the general public about existing religions and cultures, including, but not limited to, alternative religious groups...AWARE also educates the scholarly community and the general public about the severe persecution that religious and cultural minorities experience ... and to support the United States government in its efforts to heal the prejudice that exists in our country and in the world" (Lewis, 1994, p. 214). This public agenda goes far beyond scholarship.

AWARE was the sponsor for three volumes which in themselves have been the source of controversy (Lewis, 1994; Lewis & Melton, 1994a; Lewis & Melton, 1994a). Balch & Langdon (1996) provide a sobering inside view of the fieldwork which led to the AWARE 1994 volume on CUT (Lewis & Melton, 1994). The most significant and symptomatic fact here is the participation by so many recognized scholars in this effort (cf. Balch, 1996). Similar acts of support have been noted in research conference ostensibly devoted to NRMs, where leaders and representatives of NRMs (or groups claiming such a label) were being treated not only as colleagues, but as partners in a common enterprise.

It is not a question of some loose canons on the margins of the research community. What we have is not an "activist" minority and a silent majority, but a supportive, collaborating majority. Our colleagues are entitled to many presumptions of innocence, but not just doubts but pieces of evidence are piling up. I personally feel embarrassed, ashamed, and betrayed. In light of what we have witnessed we are forced to re-read, our eyes fresh with suspicion, the whole corpus of NRM literature.

We may have to reconstruct our hierarchy of credibility (Becker, 1967). Recent and less recent NRM catastrophes help us realize that in every single case allegations by hostile outsiders and detractors have been closer to reality than any other accounts.

Ever since the Jonestown tragedy, statements by ex-members turned out to be more accurate than those of apologists and NRM researchers. The reality revealed in the cases of People's Temple, Rajneesh International, Vajradhatu, the Nation of Yahweh, the Branch Davidians, the Faith Assembly, Aum Shinrikyo, the Solar Temple, or Heaven's Gate is much more than unattractive; it is positively horrifying. In every case of NRM disasters over the past 50 years, starting with Krishna Venta (Beit-Hallahmi, 1993), we encounter a hidden world of madness and exploitation in a totalitarian, psychotic, group, whose reality is actually even worse than detractors' allegations.

The happy consensus, shared by colleagues I admire and to whom I will always be in debt, turns out to be, on closer examination, a rhetoric of advocacy, apologetics and propaganda. The advocacy and apologetics agenda creates an impoverished discourse, denying the madness, passion, and exploitation involved in NRMs, and leads to an intellectual dead end. The real issue is how a community of brilliant scholars committed itself to this kind of NRM advocacy.

The solution to our integrity problem lies only in a painfully open discussion and full disclosure; open discussion of our collective deficiencies and failings, and a full disclosure of all financial ties with all organizations. In legitimate academic work, financial support is gratefully acknowledged. If you have reasons to keep your benefactors unnamed, some may suspect that you've got something to hide. As scholars, we have not taken vows of chastity, poverty, or silence. Our only vow is to criticism, suspicion, and unfettered questioning. Being a little more suspicious will keep us all not only a little more honest, but probably better scholars.

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Amsterdam '97: scholars
or apologists?
The ICESNUR
International
Conference held in
Amsterdam, Holland,
on August 7-9, 1997

An unofficial and personal
report by Dr. Herman de
Tollenaere

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Introduction

Usually, there are two rules about scholarly conferences on religion: they attract neither many people nor newspaper headlines. The eleventh international conference of the Italy-based CESNUR (Centre for the Study of New Religions) was no exception to the first rule. On the afternoon of its first day, it fitted comfortably into two small lecture-rooms on the eleventh floor of the big main building of the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam. A prominent Dutch Protestant, Abraham Kuypers, founded this university in the nineteenth century.

However, the second rule did not apply. National TV teletext paid attention. So did other media. I, for instance, was interviewed by provincial, national, and Dutch World Service radio. From 5-11 August, headlines blazed in most national and many local daily newspapers, some on front pages, some above big articles, some above big articles on front pages. Some of the headlines: "Vrije Universiteit hosts pro-cult conference", "Congress at Vrije Universiteit gets controversial because of neo-Nazi cult speaker", "Cult researchers blinded by their own empathy", "CESNUR should be more critical", "A congress about cults can never be quiet", "Scholar of religion De Tollenaere from Leiden: 'I had expected a quiet scientific congress'", and, finally: "Cult leader stands down".

New Acropolis

Why wasn't it "a quiet scientific congress"? One of the speakers scheduled to

take part was Maria Dolores Fernandez-Figares. Her subject was "New Acropolis". Dr R. Kranenborg, who organized the conference for the university, had never heard about Maria Dolores or New Acropolis. The [ground] rule for this conference is, he said, speaking about cults; not [speaking] by cults.

However, Ms Fernandez Figares turned out to be a leader of the group that was the subject of her speech. New Acropolis turned out to be not only a cult, but a cult accused of, e.g., neo-Nazism.

The occult organization New Acropolis was founded in 1957 by Jorge Livraga Rizzi, then a member of the Theosophical Society (not the Anthroposophical Society, as the Dutch daily *De Volkskrant* said) in Argentina. It spread to other South American countries and to Spain, while the dictator Franco still ruled. From there, it spread to other (mainly Southern) European countries. It has only four branches in the US. The most active one is in Miami; the three other ones are in Boston, Phoenix, and Seattle.

To outsiders, New Acropolis says that it reads tarot cards, studies innocent "philosophy", and does nice things like [sponsor] "nature walks". Their Internet web site contains bland propaganda, and their Miami branch offers a "free introductory class"; which, according to the small print on the same page, is not really free, but costs \$95 (\$75 for full-time students under 25). This reminds one of Hare Krishnas handing out books as "a free gift of God", and then saying that they are not free. Only if you know more about New Acropolis, from other sources, do their web site announcements about courses on Kung Fu and other "martial arts" sound alarming.

However, sources from many countries state, independently of one another:

- that New Acropolis claims that its leaders, like the founder Livraga, Mr. Schwarz, and Ms Gilardi, are "doctors" or "professors", while they are unable to prove this. The source of Mr Livraga's titles is the so-called International University Moctezuma, founded by the Spanish charlatan Guillermo Grau, who claims to rule a still existing Aztec empire. What business has a leader of an organization like New Acropolis, with a history of faked academic credentials, at an academic conference, one may ask.
- that New Acropolis has elite inner groups with black and brown uniforms (like Hitler's SS and SA) for male members, and uniforms in the blue colour of the troops of the dictator Franco for female members.

There are thinly disguised SS symbols on the black New Acropolis uniforms. Inner group members do a version of the Nazi salute, according to the picture from the members-only magazine for the New Acropolis Security Forces.

- that New Acropolis founder Livraga wanted homosexuals to be put into concentration camps (see Antoine Faivre, "Les courants ésotériques et le rapport. Les exemples de Nouvelle Acropole et de la Rose-Croix d'Or (Lectorium Rosicrucianum)", in Massimo Introvigne and J. Gordon Melton (eds.), *Pour en finir avec les sectes* (Paris: Dervy, 1996), end-note 1, pp. 244-245).
- that New Acropolis organized a conference in Lyon, France, in 1987, jointly with leaders of Jean-Marie Le Pen's Front National, the extreme Right racist party in France.
- that mayors in towns like Rennes in France want to ban NA public meetings.
- that New Acropolis founder Livraga stated that the wrong side had won the Second World War.
- that New Acropolis claimed that "democracy must be overthrown, or must die".
- that NA, a supposedly religious or philosophical organization, supported [General Augusto] Pinochet's bloody [1973] coup d'état in Chile.
- that Livraga organized target practice with firearms for NA members (illegal in European countries which ban private armed forces).
- that New Acropolis members bombed the mosque in Romans near Valence in France.
- that New Acropolis was very intertwined with the neo-Nazi terrorists of Westland New Post in Belgium in the 1980s (same address, largely the same members).
- that the Belgian NA member Marcel Barbier went to jail for murdering two people in the Brussels suburb of Anderlecht.
- that NA members in Spain physically attacked anti-fascists.
- that on 30 April 1994 the Madrid police raided New Acropolis headquarters and seized many stolen works of art there (See

NRC-Handelsblad [May 7, 1993]; and *International Herald Tribune* [May 4, 1993]: "Spanish police seize precious antique art works")

One may read more in, for instance, *Neue Akropolis. Sekte mit braunen Flecken* (Hamburg, 1997). See Halt (Belgian anti-fascist review) 2 (1988); and *Le Monde*, various issues.

Participants (including yours truly) asked the conference organizers not to share a platform with a leader of this kind of organization. After some hesitation, on the eve of the conference, the organizers decided not to let Ms Fernandez-Figares speak. She packed her bags, unable to score her propaganda point of acceptance among bona fide scientists. Earlier on, a Frenchman who thought he would be able to propagate his extreme rightist views to the conference had already been turned away.

So, were all problems solved? Maybe this might be premature to claim. Let us look further at CESNUR and its conference.

CESNUR

CESNUR is a private organization. Its headquarters are in the lawyer's office in Turin of its founder, the Italian Massimo Introvigne. It studies organizations which others may call "sects" or "cults", but which it calls "new religions". Some of these studies may not be critical enough. A book, published by CESNUR in 1996, contained a not thoroughly critical article on New Acropolis, based largely on oral statements by New Acropolis leaders.

One sometimes finds a "doctrine only" approach to new religious movements in CESNUR. This approach may work well for one book, for one individual, or for several individuals doing research. However, it can never work for the sociology of religion or for the history of religion, as a whole. One should also study an organization's finances; its official and unofficial power structures; its relationship to its economic, social, and political context. A "doctrine only" approach to, e.g., Scientology may lead, and in practice does lead in cases, to a far more rose-coloured picture than a "finances also" approach.

Often, outsiders criticize some people in CESNUR for having overly close personal and/or financial ties to problematic religious organizations.

CESNUR leaders have testified on behalf of groups like Scientology and the Unification Church (Moonies) in court cases. On 5 August 1997, the Dutch nation-



al daily *Trouw* wrote that the Californian J. Gordon Melton, "after the attacks [with sarin gas in the Tokyo subway] by Aum Shinri Kyo [the cult of the "Supreme Truth"] in 1995, went to Japan to support the cult against the 'unjust treatment' and 'religious oppression' by the police. The cult paid for his journey." That Aum Shinri Kyo had paid for Melton's journey "was not really sensible when we look back at it," Dr Kranenborg said in *Trouw* on 8 August. Gordon Melton, by the way, was not at the Amsterdam conference as planned. He was busy preparing a conference on Dracula in Los Angeles, at which a thousand people were expected.

The beginning of the conference

In his opening speech, Massimo Introvigne said that the New Acropolis representative would neither speak nor be present. He did not mention NA's controversial politics. Later, he conceded that New Acropolis 10 or 20 years ago was anti-Semitic; but not any more, he thought. It had played a role as a buttress to military dictators in Argentina, but not as big a role as many Roman Catholics.

Introvigne criticized attacks on new religious movements in the press: "Strong persuasion methods are not a crime." He also criticized articles in the media that said CESNUR and he were not being objective, but rather had a rightist bias. Those critics identified, for instance, his links to a right-wing pressure group within the Catholic Church, Alleanza Cattolica, which was itself linked to rightist non-Catholics. Introvigne described himself as politically centrist, a Christian Democrat. Later, I asked him: "Nowadays, the Christian Democrats call themselves the Italian Popular Party, don't they?" "No, I am not with them," Introvigne said. "They are Left and we are Right. I am in the Centro Cristiano Democratico." The CCD is a small group, a right-wing break-away from the old Christian Democratic party. It is part of the rightist alliance of the media tycoon [Silvio] Berlusconi and the neo-Fascist leader [Gianfranco] Fini. Within that alliance, the CCD has a mere 3% of the vote, versus about 15-20% each for the Berlusconi and neo-Fascists. So, being any Christian, or Democrat, or Centrist countervailing power to the hard right is not easy there.

Next, Eileen Barker of the London School of Economics spoke. In the 1980s, she had warned that people doing research

on new religions may tend to become part of what they investigate. One may ask whether later she has always maintained the sense of critical independence inherent in this view though. She describes a conversion towards a, some may say, "pro-cult" viewpoint as a "revelation" and as her "road to Damascus," in reference to what Saint Paul had experienced when converting from Judaism to Christianity (Jean Duhaime, "Rencontre avec Eileen BARKER. Pour soulager cette souffrance inutile. La Centre INFORM de Londres", *Ouvertures* (Spring 1997), p. 2). Of course, no one will deny Ms Barker or anyone else the right to have religious visions and revelations. However, it is not always easy to combine these with scientific objectivity, which requires a critical distance from one's subject.

Critics allege that this distance was lacking in Ms Barker's involvement in the Moonie front organization, the International Conference for the Unity of the Sciences. Its conferences are usually about the theme "Science and Absolute Values", meaning the values of Mr Moon, the Unification Church founder. Ms Barker contributed, for instance, a lecture on Social Science and Dramatic Art to the ICUS conference in Atlanta, Georgia, according to the printed program of that conference.

In her lecture in Amsterdam, Eileen Barker claimed that the Moonies did no harm: "How can a few Moonies subvert a country?" Someone from the audience remarked that in The Netherlands there are also few Moonies. However, their leader is an important aide to the leader of the extremist racist party in parliament, the equivalent of the National Front of Le Pen in France (where Moonies play a similar role). Ms Barker replied that she did not agree with racism, but did no go into the Unification Church's role in this.

One lady handed out orange writing-cases, made especially for this conference, containing propaganda leaflets, to all conference participants. She was a member of The Family (formerly the Children of God). Introvigne told me about their founder David Berg, aka Moses David, aka Mo: "The Family has admitted in a court case that they were founded by a paedophile. However, one cannot go on about that all the time."

During the whole conference, cult members swarmed like flies around the assembled scholars, hoping that one of them might write a favourable report on their organization. One could note Moonies like Dan Fefferman (all the way from the US), Harald Janisch (from Austria), and Peter Ladstätter (from Russia). One could encounter Scientologists and Hare Krishnas.

A blonde lady of the Brahma Kumaris also attended...

Heaven's Gate

In the evening, the organizers had added a special panel on Heaven's Gate to the programme. At first, some videos were shown. Then, Introvigne spoke for much longer than the twenty minutes which other speakers were allotted at this conference. His contribution contained many interesting details, but a controversial conclusion. He regretted that J. Gordon Melton, who knew Heaven's Gate leader Applewhite personally, was not present.

Introvigne mentioned how the mental patient Applewhite had founded his movement. His co-founder, the nurse Bonnie Nettles, was a prominent member of the Theosophical Society in Houston, Texas, and wrote the astrology column for a local newspaper. Applewhite did not have to worry about money, as one of his members was a millionaire. Heaven's Gate owned two firms: Higher Source and Computer Nomads.

Introvigne concluded that the collective suicide of Heaven's Gate had been an act of free will. This concept may be at least as problematic as the opposite concept of "brainwashing", which Introvigne rejects. In the seventeenth century, the Dutch theologian Franciscus Gomarus questioned whether there was unlimited free will. In the nineteenth century, people as diverse as Karl Marx and Emile Durkheim, a founding father of the field of sociology, questioned the concept of free will in societies full of pressures. Durkheim's *On Suicide* is especially relevant here, as it points out that a superficially extremely individual act like suicide is socially conditioned. A twentieth-century sociologist like Peter Berger agrees. One should also look at the experiments of a psychologist like Milgram, who made people do things which they certainly did not intend to originally; and at the work of his colleagues, Lifton and Schein.

In a group like Heaven's Gate, authoritarian pressure is very much stronger than in society in general. Their leader Applewhite is on record as saying that a good Heaven's Gate follower is like a dog, obeying his Shepherd (i.e., Applewhite). One could see some results of this in one of the videos shown at the conference: the video suicide note of an elderly lady in Heaven's Gate. A higher ranking Heaven's Gate member, keeping off-camera, with an assertive voice, handed this old lady "her" note with "her" suicide statement; and announced what she would say. With a

trembling voice, the old woman read out the pre-ordained message about how very happy she was to go to her Heavenly Father. According to Introvigne, one could not compare "voluntary" suicide by Heaven's Gate to "voluntary" confessions in show trials in the Soviet Union in the 1930s, since, he said, there had been no physical torture involved. Neither, one may add, had there been in the case of all the individual confessions in the 1930's trials.

In contrast to Dr Introvigne, a relative of a dead Heaven's Gate's member concluded on British television: "It really was one suicide [Applewhite's], and 38 murders." One should note here that laws in many countries differentiate between murder and manslaughter, etc. Also, insane persons are often judged differently from sane ones. It is hard to deny a nucleus of truth in the statement, however. Constance A. Jones from the US told that she had been present at a Heaven's Gate propaganda meeting. The idea that she might have joined still scared her...

The most suggestive title of the evening session was "The Great European Cult Scare". Introvigne attacked the idea that new religious movements could "brain-

Dagblad of 6 August 1997, Kranenborg said that (apart from Ms Fernandez-Figares of New Acropolis, whose speech did not go ahead) "no people who are themselves members of cults would address the conference." Some people might question the accuracy of this prediction as far as the panel on Gurdjieff was concerned. As I was not there, I will not comment on it. I will rather report on something I did attend. To Dr Kranenborg's surprise, as he later wrote me, the *Leidsch Dagblad* statement proved to be incorrect on the last morning of the conference. Kranenborg wrote that he would have, if possible, preferred to prevent what happened then. However, one can hardly stop a speech once it has started.

Eileen Barker from the chair announced the next speaker, who was to give a talk about "the VPM wars in German-Speaking Europe". However, she admitted she did "not know what the acronym VPM stands for."

That was not surprising, as this was a conference on religions. And the two representatives of the VPM who addressed the meeting claimed that the VPM was not religious. One of them was their lawyer in the "wars" (court cases) alluded to in the title

The Jung Cult, claims this about C.G. Jung. One might say similar things about Wilhelm Reich. If the Menschenkenner were indeed the real followers of Adler, one might look to see if this applied to them as well.

However, the VPM's history shows that the academic psychologist Adler was not really their founding father. That was Friedrich Liebling, a non-academic amateur psychologist. Liebling claimed he could make a "new man" through his controversial therapy. This "new man" would be free from the "psychic distortions caused by the state, religion, and education". Since the 1960s, Liebling advocated living in communes for his devotees. In these communes, people with psychic problems had to "confess their sins" to their therapists. These "sins" became known to more people than just the therapist-"confessor". They might be used against "sinners" in case of conflict. Similar things happened in the Church Universal and Triumphant (where one actually speaks of "confessing") and in Scientology (where people speak of "auditing", among other things, their sins committed in a former life, millions of years ago).

wash" people. Italy, he said, used to have an anti-brainwashing law dating from the days of Mussolini. One must remark here that, at least in the strict sense, the word "brainwashing" arose in the wake of the 1950 Korean war. Mussolini died in 1945.

Boris Falikov from Russia then discussed East European movements like the White Brotherhood. Another Russian, Marat Shterin, a doctoral student of Eileen Barker's in London, discussed a court case in Moscow brought against a Russian author who had attacked new religious movements like the Moonies. Professor Johannes Aagaard from Aarhus university in Denmark, who had also been at that trial, reacted, saying he thought Shterin's description of the trial was politically biased...

of the speech. The other read a paper by Robert Prantner (himself not present). VPM, it turned out, stands for Verein zur Förderung Psychologischen Menschenkenntnis. So, it claims to be an organization for scientific psychology. It is popularly known as Die Menschenkenner (Menschenkenntnis = Knowledge of humans). It is a rather aggressive, closed organization for political pop psychology, in some respects not unlike Scientology.

The VPM orator claimed that the movement based itself on the psychoanalyst Alfred Adler (1870-1937), a pupil of Sigmund Freud. That the politically very rightist Menschenkenner claim the Marxist Adler as their founding father may point to a shortage of attractive historical role models in their part of the political spectrum, especially in German history. Anyway, Adler is dead. So, he cannot protest about the use of his name. Recent psychologists are rather critical about the scientific level of Sigmund Freud, and especially of his pupils. Some of them inspired religious cults rather than psychology. A recent book by Richard Noll,

Liebling had some sympathy for muddle-headed forms of anarchism that were fashionable in those hippy days. However, after the 1960s, quite a few hippies threw away their flowers and beads and donned yuppie business suits. Sometimes, their politics moved to the right as well — very far to the right, in some cases. In the case of Liebling's devotees, Liebling's death and succession as guru by Ms Annemarie Buchholz-Kaiser accelerated this process. The communes continued. The public confessions of sins continued, nearly all of them recorded in writing or on audio tape. However, they were now used in the context of ever-increasing authoritarianism and political paranoia directed against non-members. The pop psychologists also started to claim competence to deal with AIDS.

Critics call the Menschenkenner a "psycho[therapy] cult". After a complaint by the Menschenkenner, a German judge decided that the critics have the right to do this. The VPM tries to win over conservative adherents by launching cam-

The last day of the conference: the Menschenkenner

According to the Dutch daily *Leidsch*

paigns against any tolerance whatsoever for marijuana and against the use of methadon in anti-heroin addiction therapies in hospitals. In this, they are similar to the Narconon program of Scientology.

The Menschenkenner attitude to psychology shows similarities to, as well as differences from, Scientology. Scientology calls itself "the modern science of mental health". To be recognized as such, it needs to depict its unwelcome competitors, psychology and psychiatry, as satanic conspiracies which should be destroyed. The Menschenkenner, on the other hand, rather than attacking scientific psychology as such, claim to be the real scientific psychologists themselves. Their attack is against all "other" psychologies. They campaign, e.g., against conflict psychology or Gestalt in education.

The executive of the German Association of Professional Psychologists, the Berufsverband Deutscher Psychologen (BDP), attacks the VPM because of its "abuse of so called psychology...and so called psychotherap...E.g., when parts of audio recordings of group therapy sessions, in which members bare their inner-

of law establish the truth. The Menschenkenner often label individuals who criticize them as Red Army Faction terrorists or drug dealers. At the Amsterdam meeting, they did this to a female member of the German parliament, Ms Jelk. Of course, Ms Jelk, not being present, could not defend herself. They singled her out because she had proposed that the German parliamentary commission on cults investigate the VPM. The Menschenkenner label various local and regional governments which criticize them, e.g., those in western Germany and the canton of Zurich in Switzerland, as successors of the former German Democratic Republic. They depict one opponent, the Federal German Ministry for Women and the Family (run by the conservative CDU party) as carrying on where the Stasi, the former secret service of the former Communist East German government, left off.

According to the VPM speaker at the Amsterdam CESNUR conference, these present-day governments are carrying on an old plan: in the early 1980s, the Ministry of the Interior of the GDR had

what they claim to be, they should take their case to organizations and conferences of psychologists, not to organizations and conferences about religion.

As for my provisional conclusions about the Menschenkenner: why was this paranoid political presentation by a movement, calling itself apolitical and areligious, being presented at a scientific conference about religions? Why did the accused individuals not have the right to defend themselves? Maybe at some future CESNUR conference, Albanian managers of pyramid business firms will try to speak. Or managers of American pyramid business firms, like Amway/Multi Level Marketing. Or their lawyers. They will say that the press has compared them unfairly to cult leaders. They will say that they are nice honest businessmen, victims of the "anti-cult movement".

As for my provisional conclusion about the conference and CESNUR: we certainly need organizations for scientific research on new and not-so-new religious movements. Such organizations should be open to diverse approaches. However, sometimes one gets the

most soul, are abused to discipline dissidents, to silence them, or even to blackmail them, then this is a clear violation of the therapists' duty not to divulge what they know, as named in criminal law. It also proves the VPM's contemptuous attitude to human beings." (See the *Informationen Deutscher Psychologen* of June 16, 1992.)

The organization of German Adlerian psychologists, the DGIP (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Individualpsychologie e. V.) dissociated itself from the Menschenkenner as well. In a declaration by its executive, published in *Psychologie heute* in May 1994, it called them "sektenhaft" (cultish) and "in strong opposition to the scientific tendency of [Adlerian] individual psychology."

As in the case of other critics, like Lutheran church people, the Menschenkenner sue organizations of academic psychologists. They lose the court cases. However, like Scientologists, they seem to sue to bully opponents rather than to have a court

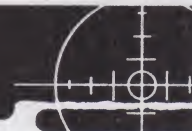
plan for attacking their political opponents. One may well wonder what this has to do with the Menschenkenner in 1997. Now, there is no more GDR. The GDR report did not name the Menschenkenner. They did not exist in the GDR then. They did not exist anywhere then. The VPM was founded in 1986. And how could a supposedly non-political organization be a political opponent?

I asked the Menschenkenner representatives repeatedly, how many of their members had university degrees in psychology; and how many had not. To this, I got no reply. Their reply was that they had many university people as members, but did not say just how many, or whether these had studied psychology or unrelated disciplines. When I asked again about psychology, they said that they had 700 members.

They also did not reply to the question, which I asked repeatedly, about their relationship to organizations of professional psychologists. If they are

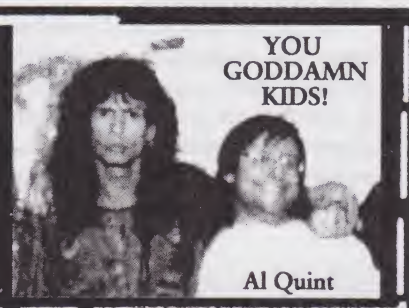
impression that certain people are blurring the lines between a legitimate scientific organization and an apologetic political lobbying group for those movements.

Born in Leiden, The Netherlands, Herman de Tollaere studied history as his main subject at Leiden university and received an M.A. in economic and social history in 1974. His secondary subjects were the sociology of education and the history of political ideas. His PhD has been published as The Politics of Divine Wisdom: Theosophy and labour, national, and women's movements in Indonesia and South Asia, 1875-1947 (Nijmegen University Press, 1996). He has also published articles on Indian and Indonesian history and the history of occult movements in Theosophical History, Religie Nu, The Indian Skeptic, and Skepter (the Dutch skeptic review). He is currently working on a new biography of Indonesia's first president, Sukarno, whose father was a Theosophist. †



So I'm sequencing the new *Suburban Voice* CD with Bob, who is one of the best recording engineers in the business (seriously!), and I ask him if the rumors are true that he's going to be doing some work on the upcoming album by a mega-huge rock act. Indeed, it's true and he'll be working on the bass and drum tracks for said album. He also tells me that these bass and drum patterns are written by the producer and the musicians are basically told what to play. This is also a band that had its greatest success by using outside song "doctors" such as the insufferable Diane Warren. Ah, what the hell...it's Aerosmith! A band I used to greatly respect (I wrote about their 70's work in the first issue of this here 'zine), who are now little more than employees of their producers, label, and songwriters.

Sure, sure, they haven't made a good album since 1977 or so, but I keep holding out hope they're going to come to their senses, woodshed in a rehearsal space somewhere on one of the guys' palatial estates, and get back to their rockin' roots. That almost happened



when they returned to their original label, Columbia. They'd

recorded what was rumored to be a balls-out rock album, but the label rejected it for not being "commercial" enough and for not having enough "hit" singles. So more outside parties were brought in to retool

things and it worked — "Nine Lives" was a huge success. A shitty album, but a commercial success.

That's the price you pay when your music becomes a corporation, a logo, what have you. I suppose as long as the checks keep rolling in and don't bounce, some people won't complain. But I wouldn't call them artists at that point. Corporate whores is a better description. No better than these manipulated boy-bands, although at least Aerosmith can play their own instruments. It's just that they're being told *what* to play, now. There's nothing spontaneous or creative going on here. It's being made with an eye on the bottom line, of having hits aimed at the largest possible radio demographic. It's contrived.

And it's not just in major label-land that this nonsense happens. I have an old friend who's an A&R person at a large independent label. This friend told me that the somewhat big-name producer for a band he was working with fired that band's drummer because he didn't think he was good enough. Thereby making the decision for them. If I was in a band, I would never allow someone outside the entity to dictate personnel moves to me. Or tinker with the songwriting process, but that's another matter altogether — that's apparently the function of a producer, at least in the big-time rock realm.

The "fire-the-drummer" syndrome seems to happen to bands quite a bit once they advance from indy to major. I can think of two instances in particular — Soul Asylum and the Goo Goo Dolls, both of whom used to be

pretty good bands and completely turned to shit once they hit the major label realm. Soul Asylum were probably always somewhat overrated anyway, but their first few albums had some good songs. But once they hit Columbia Records, their long-time sticksman Grant Young was shown the door. Right around the time when "Runaway Train" (YECCCH!!) was a hit. [By the way, has anyone ever seen Seaweed's "Kid Candy" video, which parodied the "Runaway Train" video, but they had notices about stolen bikes instead of runaway kids? Great song, too. Whatever happened to those guys?]

Then there's the Goo Goo Dolls, who have turned into an FM-lite hit-making machine, a far cry from their ragtag punk origins. Sure, there was a lot of early Replacements worship going on and, whatever direction Paul Westerberg went in, you could be sure the Goos would soon follow. Of course, once they became popular, their original drummer George was canned because he apparently couldn't cut it anymore. Anyone unfamiliar with the Goo Goo Dolls' first three albums, especially the second one "Jed," might wonder what the hell I'm talking about. But trust me on that one — if you like spirited, tuneful punk rock, those guys were credible purveyors of it at that point. It's a long way from a song like "Up Yours" to "Iris," unfortunately, and what was once more of a democratic situation has turned into Johnny Rzeznik's vision, plus his backing players. They used to be such a kickass live band, too, yet looked and sounded absolutely neutered when I caught a few seconds of them on some TV awards show. I'm sure they've been handsomely rewarded monetarily for their efforts and, yes, they've paid their dues as a band, but it's still ear-candy hackwork.

I know most of the readers of this 'zine could give a rat's ass about any Top 40 type bands, especially since there's a plethora of cool underground music to listen to and see live. I'm with you guys...I just find such music biz shenanigans simultaneously amusing and tragic. It's sad to see how much commerce outstrips any sense of art. This should serve as a caveat to any bands that decide to "go for it." Unless, of course they're only in it for the money — in which case they can fuck off, anyway.

I have to respectfully disagree with a few points made by a couple of columnists in the last issue of *Hit List*. Leslie Goldman, in her column

about the protesters at the Republican convention in Philly, stated that "These people should at least be thankful that our government is set up in such a way that they are allowed to promote their poorly thought-out anti-government views freely on the street. A lot of people in other countries don't have that luxury, but it's something Americans take for granted and sometimes abuse." Come on — whether the protesters are right or wrong (and we can argue about that all day), the police

and other law enforcement authorities do their damndest to quash dissent. Anyone who speaks out too loudly in this country feels the boot of oppression. Think I'm being bombastic? What happened during the Civil Rights era? To the four students at Kent State who were shot by the National Guard? Whether the issues being bandied about by the current crop of activists are valid or not, if they engage in peaceful dissent they shouldn't have to fear for their personal safety or lives. And I'm not talking about the

***If I was in a band, I would
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personnel moves to me.***

handful of troublemakers who want to fuck shit up by throwing debris at cops or smashing windows. But peaceful protesters and activists have been subjected to abuse.

In Leslie's hometown of Philly, the police have a long-standing reputation as a thuggish force, dating back to the days of when Frank Rizzo ran the department. I don't think there was a whole lot of respect for First Amendment rights or the right of free assembly during that week, or in Seattle, DC, or LA. While there were a small number of violent activists, the majority were peaceful and non-violent and subject to outright assault by the police. In Philly, activists were arrested and held on obscenely high bail for misdemeanor charges, including \$1 million bail (later reduced) for the head of the Ruckus Society, who was arrested while walking down the street talking on a cell phone. The message was clear — dissent will not be tolerated.

Another place where voices of dissent can't be heard are in the presidential debates. The election might be over by the time this sees print, but no matter who wins the American public isn't getting the full spectrum of candidates. The two party Republicrat duopoly, backed by the huge corporate interests funding the debates, don't want to allow any dissenting voices to be heard. They want to keep the range of debate narrow. I believe that political debates should be open to all parties, to allow a wide-range of ideas to be discussed — people from the Green Party, the Reform Party, the Libertarian Party, and even fringe parties should be allowed to participate.

The other point I wanted to take issue with was Larry Livermore's. A slight disagreement, and maybe I didn't read into his column deeply enough. I'll acknowledge that great strides in race relations have been made over the last 40 years, but racism is still an ingrained part of society. One need go no further than police profiling. I just got through looking at an article in this morning's *Boston Globe*, where a 13-year old black kid was suspected of loading stolen merchandise into a stolen car and the cops claimed they had a videotape of him doing it. According to the article, not only was he not the right suspect (it was a 29-year old man), but the videotape didn't even exist and they only pretended it did in the hopes of getting the kid to confess. The police from the town where the incident occurred had to issue a written apology. There are some towns in the area in which I live where you're likely to be pulled over if you have dark skin. One of my wife's co-workers, who is from Africa, got pulled over and given a \$230 speeding ticket (and he claims he wasn't going anywhere near as fast as they claimed and that the time on the ticket wasn't even correct) in the lily-white community where they work and the cop said to the guy, "do you know where you are?," the insinuation being that since he had dark skin, he didn't belong there. That's my take on it and this isn't the first time such a thing has happened to someone with dark skin in this community — it happened to the husband of another of her co-workers some years back. Don't even get me started on Amadou Diallo, the young African man shot by the cops in NYC, or Abner Louima, who was sodomized with a plunger.

Granted, these are anecdotes and I could give examples of white-on-white or black-on-white incidents. One of my writers' girlfriends was harassed by an Asian and Latino cop in Houston, and he thinks it was racially motivated. So it can go both ways. The point, though, is this remains a racist country in many respects.

And let the record show that I agreed with many of Larry's points —

ALQUINT

racism is racism, no matter where it comes from. And while I think Mumia Abu-Jamal deserves a new trial, at the very least, and am unequivocally opposed to the death penalty, naming him as a VP candidate, as Biafra did, is a farce. Mumia has become a bandwagon-jumping *cause celebre*, but if the end result is to throw a spotlight on the unfair and capricious application of the death penalty, then perhaps the ends justify the means.

That's enough pontificating for one column. Let's get to the fun part...a round-up of noteworthy releases that have been kicking my ass of late. I try to include mainly things that might not otherwise get reviewed in the record review section, but that's not always going to be the case. Think of it as a different perspective if there's overlap...

LAST IN LINE — "L'Esercito Del Morto"

If you're one of those people who is disillusioned with the state of hardcore in recent years, thinking that it's been given over entirely to blustery metal bands and their kick-boxing minions, give this album a listen and restore your faith. Last In Line may be fairly obvious in their influences and be happy to mine the early 80s hardcore motherlode, but so what? These guys play with a dead-on tightness and aggressiveness, flying through their songs with an unstoppable power and spirit. Seamless transitions from thrash to mosh, er, circle pit parts, and back again. DJ's vocals are appropriately bellicose and backed up by two blazing guitars, throttle-shot bass, and kick-ass drumming. Lyrics that have a point, whether about money going for sports teams instead of improving education, the drudgery of the 9-5 existence, or aggressive foreign policy, but not taking themselves too seriously — not with a song about classic horror

movies ("Crimson Screen") or their cover of GG Allin's "You Hate Me And I Hate You." One of 'em has "negative" in his e-mail address and the two best-known Negative bands (FX and Approach) are definitely a big part of the equation here. Damn near as perfect a HC record as you'll hear all year. Don't miss their earlier 7", either. (ACME/PO Box 441/Dracut, MA 01826)

DILLINGER FOUR — "Versus God"

It'd be mighty difficult for Dillinger Four to top the near-perfection of "Midwestern Songs" ("This Shit Is Genius" was a singles collection and not a "proper" album, although it's still far and away one of my favorites last year). They don't top it, but it's still an awe-inspiring blast that blows away 99% of the other crud out there. Brilliant songwriting, an unflappable energy and spirit. Music with HEART, as Jack Rabid would say. The lyrics, as usual, are from a personalized perspective and deal with the protagonists' own lives, but also discuss larger issues as well. As the title might indicate, religion comes in for a pretty solid trouncing, particularly on "Last Communion." But it's more than just a laundry list of issues. There's sort of a running theme here. If there's a D4 credo, it's this — break free of the indoctrination, the rat-race, live your life however the fuck you want. Jump around, laugh your ass off, act obnoxious, give the middle finger to those who deserve it, but always keep an eye on the big picture, speak your mind

HIT SQUAD

True and in-your-face. (Sound Pollution/PO Box 17742/Covington, KY 41017)

DEGENERICS — "Generica"

Generic? Not exactly. New Jersey's Degenerics lash out with trigger-finger rage and the main focus is on hard-hitting, fast hardcore, but they cast a wider net with melodic touches, a reggae instrumental, and some metal licks along the way. The penultimate track, "risingsunexperience," builds to a chaotic barrage of noise. There's even a brief acoustic piece here. Lyrics exploring personal trauma and the sinister elements of a fucked-up world with a cynical eye and printed in collage-style booklet (kinda tough to read at times, unfortunately). An air of unpredictability and reaching a furious pitch when in full-attack mode, with a combination of power and drama. (Dead Alive/PO Box 97/Caldwell, NJ 07006)

DEATHREAT — "The Severing Of The Last Barred Window"

This is the *good* band called Deathreat — one word, not two, from Memphis, not Connecticut. Got it? Anyway, sharp, aggressive hardcore that features superior production and playing when compared to previous stuff I've heard from them. Angry vocals, a rampaging tempo for the most part, and blazing guitars. They did a split with Talk Is Poison, and it has a similar go-for-broke fervor and memorable riffs. A bilious world view to match the music's rage. A gatefold sleeve and abstract artwork give you something eye-catching to gaze at while the auditory eruption hits you between the ears. (Partners In Crime/PO Box 820043/Memphis, TN 38182) †

As always, if you need to get in touch (or want to order the new *Suburban Voice*, which is out now), write to PO Box 2746, Lynn, MA 01903/E-mail: alellen@shore.net

honestly and perhaps, in your own way, try to make a difference. You end up thinking, "they understand, they GET how fucked up this world is, but it's not going to get them down and shouldn't get me down, either." But it's just music, right? Just a band with songs and words on the paper, right? NO! What makes this band so gut-punching is the way they enliven those words with mesmerizing hooks and ferocious power. Careening with deadly aim on just about every song, but to mention a few in particular, "WreckThePlaceFantastic," "Define 'Learning Disorder'," "Q: How Many Punks Does It Take To Change A Lightbulb" and "Maximum Piss & Vinegar." The latter has the classic line, "I'd like to be the one to wipe that smile off your face," etc...and I challenge anyone to deny they haven't felt that way at one time or another. No other pop/punk band in recent memory throttles it down so fucking HARD and with so much joyous resonance. Heck, few bands do that PERIOD, regardless of genre. Those hooks are there...and they will find you, sure as shit. (Hopeless/PO Box 7495/Van Nuys, CA 91409)

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? — "Hollow Victory-Stand Fast Armageddon Fighter!"

Bringin' it back? You bet — the "it" is unadulterated, ultra-thrashing hardcore or "bandana thrash," as they call it. Tight, powerful, ripping songs with thoughtful lyrics on a number of topics, including Samurai warriors, a reference to *The Three Musketeers* and a song sung in Japanese that attempts to explain vegetarianism and veganism to WHN?'s fans in that country. The lyric insert includes personal observations on most of the songs. WHN? are a "positive" band, yet there's nothing cheesy or contrived about it, at least from where I sit. Four guys from such bands as Spazz, Your Mother and All You Can Eat get together and decide to play the hard 'n fast music they grew up listening to. A throwback, for sure, but a welcome one.

the movielife



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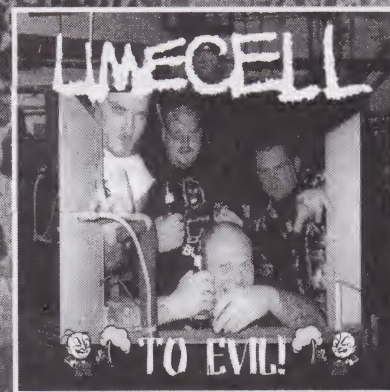
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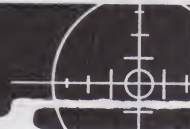
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I was flipping through the last issue, trying to figure out what I was going to write about for this one when I realized something — I really am the only female columnist. [ed. note: not for long!] Or at least I was in the last issue. I hesitate to even bring this up because the gender issue gets so overblown, and this is an observation, not a complaint. I don't care if I'm the only female columnist, but I have to mention it in order to get to my greater point.

And that is...guess what? I've pranked you all. Because I'm not merely "a girl," as so many of my friends and co-workers have pointed out to me over the years, I'm also "one of the guys." Just to be fair to Larry, lest people think he's married to a hermaphrodite or some other type of genetic mutation, I would like to state for the record that I am biologically female; I have a vagina, I menstruate, and I do not have, nor ever have had, a Y chromosome. Yet I'm "one of the guys." On the outside I actually appear rather feminine. I like to wear make-up, particularly lipstick and eyeliner. I fancy skirts and heels, although mainly I prefer skirts because I have long legs

Being one of the guys is both a blessing and a curse. On the one hand, I'm able to do things like climb into the back of the Dwarves' van, which at the time was chock full of sweaty Dwarves and bursting at the seams with testosterone, shit-talking, and other assorted acts of bravado, and be treated with respect and not like some kinda whore/groupie. I'm also privy to information that I might otherwise be excluded from. I don't think it's any secret that men speak differently around other men than they do around women (particularly women they think they might have an opportunity to fuck) so my aura of "guy-ness" grants me rare insight into the male mind, not to mention access to all sorts of stories and gossip I might otherwise never hear. On the other hand, sometimes this information is the kind I wouldn't mind being excluded from.

Allow me to illustrate with a recent example. Some of you readers may know, or have heard of/about, our friend Paul Bearer (not the Paul Bearer from Sheer Terror, or the ex-manager of WWF's the Undertaker — this P.B. hails from Philly and was once the lead singer for the Serial Killers, among other accolades too numerous to name here. (If you should ever come into contact with him, ask him and I'm sure he'd be happy to fill you in.) Before I continue, I should say for the record that I love Paul as if he were a member of my own family and that this is in no way meant as a knock against him. Having said that, Paul has a big fucking mouth and, in some cases, no clue as to what is and is not appropriate to say.

During a recent visit, while Larry was in the kitchen making all of us breakfast, Paul started telling me about a mutual friend of ours who had experienced a long bout of involuntary celibacy but had recently met and started a relationship with a woman who was a little older than him. I made some kind of comment like "...age isn't really that big of a deal; some men like an older, more experienced woman." He responded with "Yeah, he said he doesn't care how old she is. She's really into him and you know what else?" To which I stupidly replied, "No, Paul, what?" (Had I kept my mouth shut or changed the subject I would have gotten away from the conversation scot-free but no, I had to humor him.) "She's a three input woman." I think that instead of responding, I just groaned. I'm open-minded sexually and I sincerely hope all my friends enjoy a

happy sex life and fuck as often as they like, in whatever way they desire, but I can live without knowing the minute details — particularly I can live without the image of this mutual friend of ours slipping the pole to his lady love, anally or otherwise. (No offense to the un-named couple who will hopefully never, ever read this.) I asked Paul why he felt he needed to share this information with me, and he snappily replied, "I was just making conversation."

And then he followed that

up with, "Well, you're one of the guys. I tell you the same stuff I tell Larry." I took that as a compliment but also suggested that in general he might want keep some of those details to himself. I think what really did me in as far as forever being treated like one of the guys was getting married, because the availability factor seems to make a big difference.

...I would like to state for the record that I am biologically female; I have a vagina, I menstruate, and I do not have, nor ever have had, a Y chromosome

flip
AND flops
champagne



leslie goldman

and a shapely booty and the makers of women's pants only allow for one or the other; and I wear heels because I always wanted to be super tall—like Corey from Nashville Pussy (I'm only 5'5" so I need help in that department). I don't actually go out of my way to appear feminine, that's just what I like to wear and feel most comfortable in.

Despite my outward appearance, though — now and forever — I will always be categorized as "one of the guys". Why that is, I don't really know. Maybe because there aren't a lot of females in my immediate family, and I spent a lot of my childhood hanging out with my two male cousins, who are the same age as my sister and I. (By the way, she is also "one of the guys.") Whatever the reason, it's been like this for as long as I can

remember. Much like my comment about currently being the only female columnist, this isn't a complaint as much as it is an observation. It isn't really something that bothers me, and I certainly don't lose any sleep over it, but it is a constant source of amusement and bewilderment to me. And so it has become, perhaps inevitably, the topic of this column.

Take our next example: Earlier this year I was paid a visit by one of my oldest friends — in terms of how many years we've known each other, not his age. His name is Joe. (I've elected to use Joe and Paul's real names, since there's no need "protect the innocent" as neither of them is really innocent!) As I mentioned, I've known this guy for a really long time. Our relationship has changed a lot over the years, particularly since I moved in with, and subsequently married, Larry, 'cause since then Joe and I no longer have sex. I mean I still have sex, just not with him. And vice versa — at least, you know, when he can talk a girl into it. But back in the day, we used to have one of those strange relationships that vacillated between "just friends" and "more than just friends" or, as I like to dub it, FTF — friends that fuck. (I've also heard people less crude than myself call this phenomenon "friends with privileges," but I see no point in sugar coating the situation.)

At any rate, to get back to my story, one day he was hanging out at our apartment while waiting for another friend of ours, also named Larry, to get off work. When that happened, my Larry offered to give Joe a ride to the other Larry's house. For whatever reason, I elected to stay home. So they got ready to head out, Larry was about halfway out the door. Joe was right behind him, but then he came back inside and into the living room where I was. He said something to the effect of "Oh, I forgot something," and then ripped a

LESLIE GOLDMAN


totally nasty, smelly fart. Then he laughed and smirked with pride, like he had just zinged Dennis Miller on live TV, and went back towards the door. I didn't react right away 'cause I think I was in a little bit of shock, but after regaining my composure I ran to the door and yelled "What the fuck is wrong with you!?! Don't fucking fart in front of me on purpose! I'm still a lady, goddamn it!" ('Cause, as you know, ladies always yell

obscenities at the top of their lungs in public places.) But seriously, come on — what's next, a wedgie? Well, he's shit outta luck on that end. I also fancy thong panties so, assuming I'm wearing any, there's a 90% chance that I've already gotten a wedgie courtesy of Victoria's Secret. But my point is, that's something he never would have done when there was still a possibility that at the end of the night one of us would end up on top of the other. Now that I'm married, I'm no longer a possible


***I also fancy thong panties so,
assuming I'm wearing any,
there's a 90% chance that I've
already gotten a wedgie
courtesy of Victoria's Secret.***


sex partner — I'm one of the guys.


So there you have it. My secret has been revealed. Now the higher-ups around here will have to find another comely young lass to trot out as the token female columnist "show pony." (That last line is a joke, by the way.)



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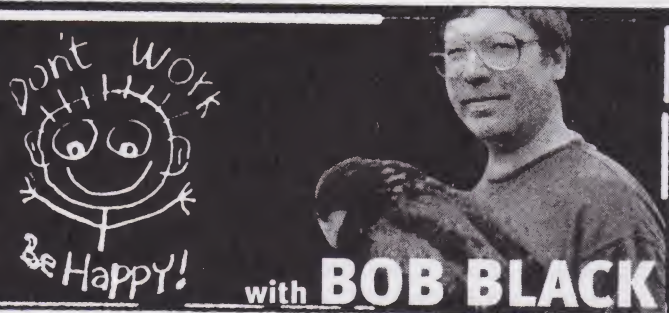
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HIT SQUAD

Humbly Report

Having so resoundingly ridiculed the ORSSASM sisters' *Sheroes* catalog (in *Hit List* 2:2) for its many ideologically driven errors of fact, it's only fair for me to own up (as they do not) to an error of fact. One of their blurbs is still wrong — if anything, worse than I suspected — but I too erred importantly.

Having carefully consulted the *Histories* of Herodotus — usually considered the first real history ever written — I am forced to retract my conjecture that Artemesia, allegedly a Persian military she-hero, was a Greek propaganda concoction.



Everything else I wrote, however, was true.

I remarked that her name was Greek. She was, in fact, the Greek "queen" of the minor Greek city of Halicarnassus in

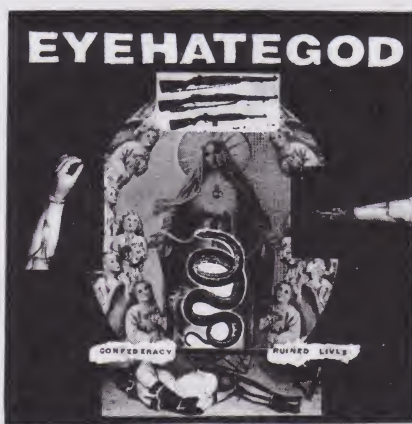
Asia Minor — rather, she was its quisling, running it on behalf of its Persian rulers. Among her subjects was Herodotus himself, so no wonder he talked her up. At home as during the Persian invasion of Greece, she was a traitor to her own people.

In my review, I noticed that she could hardly have been a sea-captain at the battle of Marathon (490 B.C.) because the battle of Marathon was a land battle. Indeed, she was involved in the sea battle of Salamis in 480 B.C., during the second Persian imperialist invasion of Greece. I doubt the ORSSASM sisters would consider as complementary, as Herodotus intended it, his statement that she "served out of true spirit and manliness" (Herod., *Hist.* 7.99). Before the battle, Artemesia advised the Persian king Xerxes to fight on land, not at sea: "For these men [the Greeks], your adversaries, are, at sea, as much better as yours as men are than women"! (*Hist.* 8.68)

One last detail. An Athenian galley was overtaking Artemesia's. In order to make her escape, she rammed and sank a *Persian* ship. The Athenians, assuming from this that she was either part of their fleet or deserting to it, gave up the chase, and she returned safely to the foreign tyrant she served. Considering all this, I'd say she's an even worse shero or feminist icon than if she were only faked-up propaganda, as I at first supposed. But having said this, I confidently predict that Artemesia, like Charlotte Corday, will again take her proud place in next year's *Sheroes* calendar. †

Bob Black
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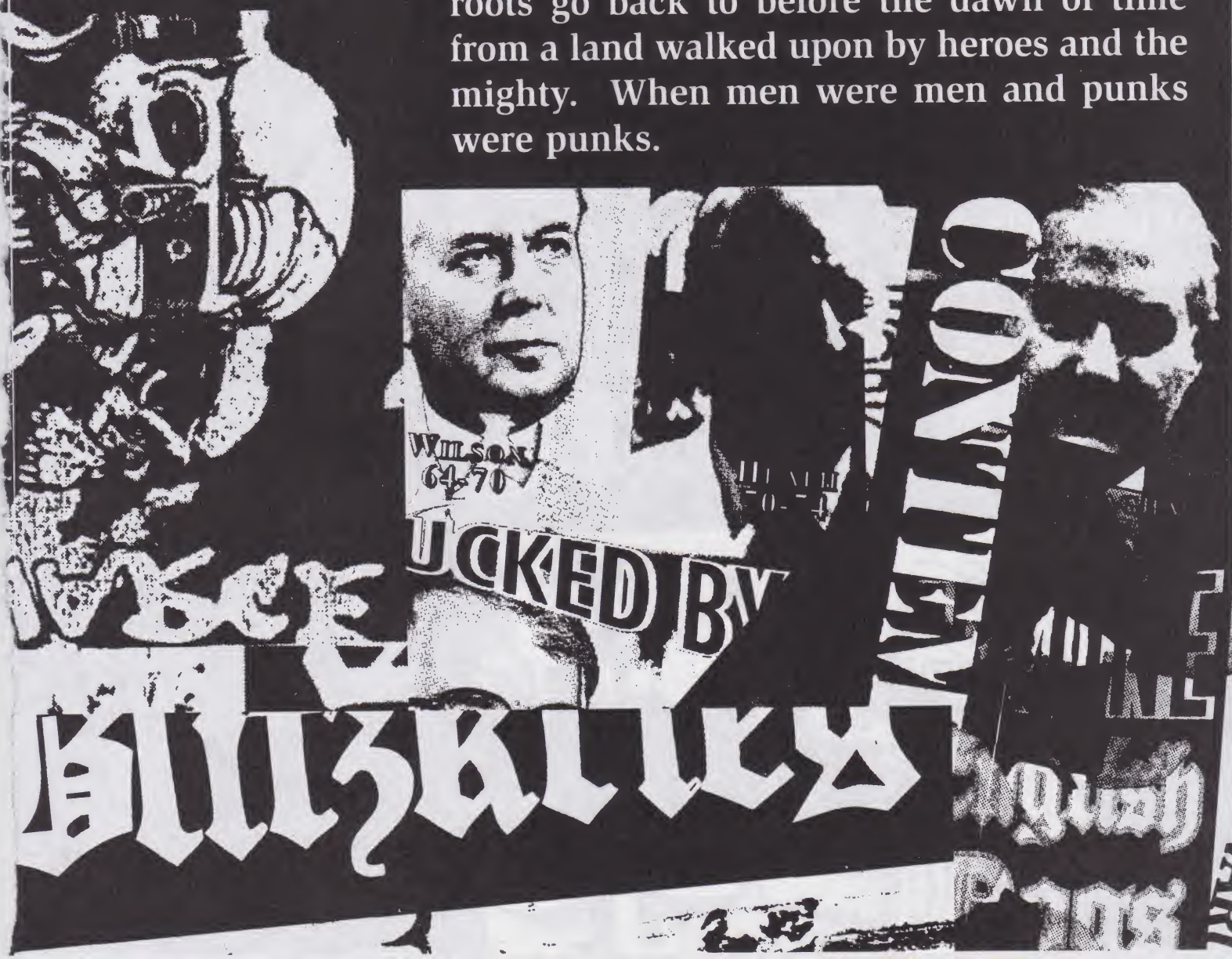
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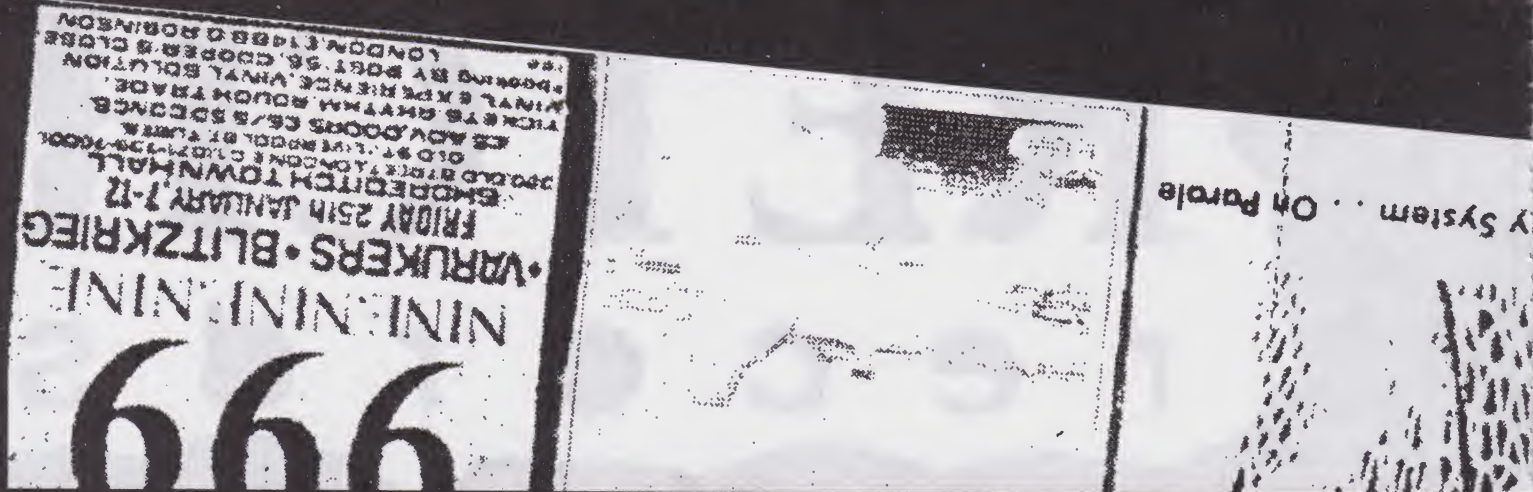
RETCH

records

Interview by Rebecca De Morny of and on behalf of Shake, Rattle and Screetch Fanzine.

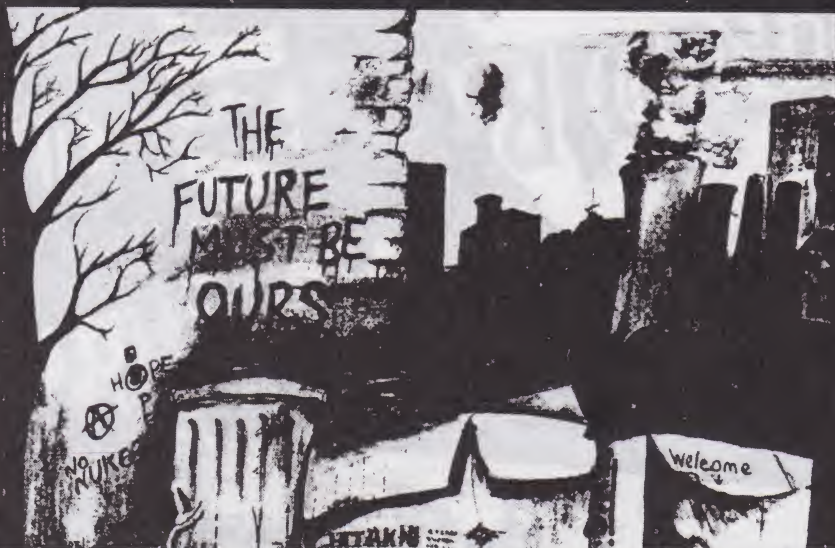
Retch Records and Blitzkrieg share a common factor in the shape of Spike. The Blitzkrieg vocalist and heartthrob is also head honcho of Retch Records. Blitzkrieg's roots go back to before the dawn of time from a land walked upon by heroes and the mighty. When men were men and punks were punks.





Retch Records poked its veiny purple head out of the uterus of creation in 1989, a time when...oh bollocks I'm not starting all that again. Retch's first release was Paradox UKs Charmed Existence EP and it now has over 25 releases in its catalogue to date, featuring such spiky-haired, bulgy-crotched luminaries as Blitz, The Varukers, English Dogs, One Way System, Abrasive Wheels, Blitzkrieg, and Sanity Assassins to name...well quite a few actually.

Blitzkrieg



OK ladies and gentlemen in a ladies and gentlemen kind of a way, ladies and gentlemen, without further ado the interview, all questions are answered by Spike.

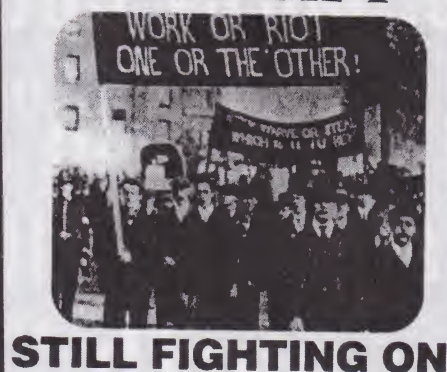
Screechers: Can you tell me the reason behind starting the label?

Spike: Initially to release the first single for Paradox UK, because no bugger would touch it with a 10 foot pole — but it turned out a classic — and partly because I wanted to redress the balance of the crust and ridiculous grunting million-mile-an-hour, lost-the-plot snorts of bands like Napalm Death and all the other bluffers, licking the arse crack of the mainstream media press and major label hype, it just pisses me off how a bunch of twatty college graduates can basically dictate the ebb and flow of modern music via the media. A plague upon them and their Elvis Costello collections and may they fail in their chosen careers.

Q: Blitzkrieg: will the future be theirs? Or are they finally worm food.

Spike A: As far as I'm concerned, and for the foreseeable future, definitely worm food. It's like this, the Blitzkrieg train pulled into the station marked good taste and I got off. I don't know, I got sick of being treated like a piece of antique furniture, or hamburger and fries, a fast food juke box, Spike playing the part of Spike, it was just horrible really, people just wanted to use the name for their own purposes, me the person underneath can just piss off basically, I just got sick and tired of the total lack of respect shown — you know kind of product Blitzkrieg. I mean, what would the point be to continue, it was all about breaking new ground in the first place, I don't want to be an electric museum and these people who

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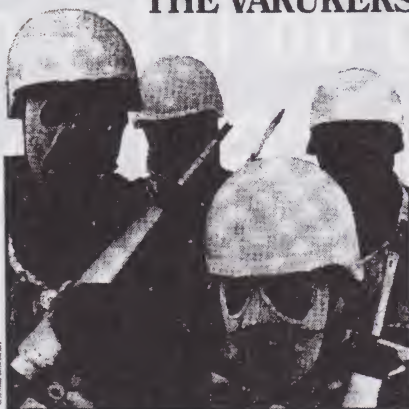
do have totally missed the point.

Q: How are things going with Retch?
How are the sales, do you think you have
been treated fairly?

Spike: I feel with Retch Records I'm going to hell in a bucket, but at least I'm holding the handle. Things have been better, I feel like everyone has basically had their fair share out of my efforts. There are a lot of people out there treated me very well, actually and they're up there with the angels, they know who they are. There again there's been those running off into the distance zipping their pants up after they've finished fucking me in the ass (but not literally) I'm not George Michael you know, there again I don't want to be negative but most are bastards, a plague upon their Sheena Easton collection and may they also fail in their chosen career. Sales? Unless it's the boring old farts, old school, then its pants, its tough to break new bands, take some chances, give more play to new bands, buy more records, you're killing the scene, we're back to the hamburger and fries thing again, don't be so safe and lazy you twats.

Q: I believe the Future Must be Ours

THE VARUKERS



ONE STRUGGLE

album is finally being re-issued in the States and on a world-wide basis, as it was woefully underpressed. Talk to me baby.

Spike: Sure thing angel cakes, yes it is, and yes it was, its being re-issued through GMM in Atlanta, hopefully as soon as this is out, much thanks to Chet from Adolph and the Piss Artists on this one, you forgot to tell them about the Insane/Blitzkrieg Punk Collection CD out on Captain Oi that's the plug over with, it's a wonderful piece of work, or pieces of work with good games the whole family can play, how did that man get to be so talented, how did they write such a great LP, buy it, dig it, make me rich and shout frig it.

Q: Retch Records seems to be inextricably linked with the Oi scene, are you happy with this, and what are your objectives with the whole caboodle.

A: I don't know, would I know anything. No in all seriousness, I'm kind of happy if any bugger shows an interest, all are welcome, but that's the point all are welcome, I'd personally like to see all tags like Oi, Street Punk, Hardcore and every other tag chucked away, bollocks to pigeon holes, you don't categorize me, and to be quite frank, I get really pissed off with this whole tribe thing, be a shelf be yourself or be an elf if you wish. When you categorize things it becomes instantly understood and therefore dull and redundant, where's the joy in that.

Q: Are you happy with what Blitzkrieg achieved, do you think it achieved its objective, what are the differences between now and the 80's.

Spike A: Yes, I am happy actually with what it achieved I'm well pleased, with having piles I can't shift from those cold vans, you try cold steel against arse cheeks,



in a snow bound car park at 3 o'clock in the morning in Huddersfield, sweaty and smelly. In all seriousness its always been a travelling freak show of bizarre characters and minds, I never knew how it held together but it did in its own rag and bone man kind of way and musically and lyrically it worked as well. I think we probably cut the best single on No Future Records with the Lest We Forget EP, arguably alongside Blitz's stuff which was also top drawer. We sold a lot of records, drank a lot of beer, caught a lot of diseases, pissed each other off and confused the fuck out of everybody. The songs stand up. I'm happy, and yes we achieved our objectives yes, met a lot of cool people and some arseholes, but we always managed to get drunk with them all and get covered in sick. Difference between now and the 80's? I felt it was more of a threat and a challenge then, more original thinking, it was all fresh and enthusiastic, we were taking the world on and trying to change it, maybe in a small way we all did, although I've only ever had my face farted in since. Today I just wish people well, yes OK use the platform built, but do your own thing with it.

Q: Hey what's cooking in the house of Retch, what's hot on the hob as regards releases present and future, are you happy with the standard of output so far.

Spike: Well coming your way next with a sports jacket draped over its shoulder, nonchalantly swaggering with its hat at a jaunty angle, is a release, a full length CD even from Atlanta's Adolph and the Piss Artists, title to be decided, hopefully followed by Sanity Assassins, Lies and Glory. Present? Thanks very much, I'll have a complete set of garden furniture and a barbecue. Sorry that's just not funny. Am I happy with the output? Indubitably. God has a hard on for my releases, its as simple as that really, what with Blitzkrieg's

"First single to do it for me, corny but true, Sex Pistols "God Save the Queen" rocked England to its foundations. Still the hardest record on earth."

Future Must be Ours and The Varukers Live in Leeds 84, One Struggle One Fight, English Dogs, Paradox UK, I'm just simply lost in the bowels of my own self importance.

Q: Do you think you're guilty of hypocrisy, your lyrics appear to take the high moral ground in some respects, and do you practice what you preach.

A: Good question, well Lest We Forget, is basically anti-Nazi genocide, most of the lyrics deal with themes from that to state abuse of power. Starving African nations spending what little they've got on fighting wars with the west eager to get them into debt, so I've never been guilty of acts of genocide, not unless you count farting after curry. I've never joined an African fighting faction, do you see what I'm getting at, they're not really on a personal level, yes I walk with clay feet the same as the next man, I'm not perfect, hard to believe I know.

Q: Do you think the punk movement has any relevance still? Does it have anything left to say? What was the first record that did it for you and who are your heroes.

A: Yes it does, but only in that its all there bloody well is, there really is nothing else out there worth a tupenny fart, yes it does have things to say but only in a two bit, who's this mad fucker, at speakers corner kind of way, I think it lacks true spirit and humour, its either ridiculously p.c. or ridiculously puke stained, bone headed, macho thuggery, if only you'd all listen and then sod off. First single to do it for me, corny but true, Sex Pistols, God Save the Queen, rocked England to its foundations. Still the hardest record on earth, and when you've got a black line at number one in the charts as opposed to the band's name, sheer heaven. Heroes? Douglas Bader, Martin Luther King, anybody with a big fat

arse who refuses to buy a pair of trousers in the larger size and has that ass crack spilling out everywhere, you've got to love it.

Q: If Blitzkrieg don't re-form what would you like as your epitaph? Will you reform? Anybody you'd like to thank or mention?

A: As for re-formations never say never, I can't think why the hell we would but a lot of cash could do it, or hot tubbing with Pamela Anderson and Cindy Crawford there'd be a point to that, but no I don't think so. As for an epitaph, the Blitzkrieg headstone would read: "We tried to change the world but we only got piles, if only you'd appreciated our undoubted genius, too late, piss off, the future must be ours."

As for thanks and mentions, Chet from Adolph and the Piss Artists. The following dear friends and sweet guys, Orlando X and the boys of Intrepid, Rachel the Champ Campos for bringing the colour back to my cheeks, anybody who came to a gig or bought a record, put their tongue down my throat, or bought a t shirt, I love you all until my arse cheeks wrinkle and crack and you Rebecca its been a blast its been a gass its tickled my ass, cheers.

RETCH
records



Just as Summer ran out of gas, the season was saved for me (from such dire entertainment options as the Kiss Farewell Tour and "Survivor") by a knockout local show last week by NRBQ. Now, for the *Hit List* "for those about to punk out" crowd, these guys should not for any reason whatsoever be on the radar screen. In other words, they never seem pissed off about anything. Nonetheless, it's worth noting that for over three decades, NRBQ has held a spot on the short list of most consistently great live bands in the land. Judging by this Summer 2000 edition of the 'Q' - and this really should be no surprise - they are at the top of their game.

A little background: The original NRBQ were all vets of the British Invasion-era regional U.S. teen scenes. The biggest Pre-Q notice was courtesy of the Wildweeds, who as far as hopped-up blue-eyed soul rivalled the Rascals and even proved it on their all-time classic (but only) mid-chart hit, "No Good To Cry". NRBQ arrived on Columbia Records in the late 60's, but really made their mark throughout the following decade. In the early 70's, they were dropped from a not-so-hot (despite past glory) second company, Kama Sutra Records. Beginning in the years immediately leading up to the CBGB's explosion, NRBQ were crafting a similar DIY career path with releases on their own lightly-distributed label.

However, the difference as already stated, between 'em and the punks was in the sound. From day one NRBQ displayed a unique style, melding R&B, rockabilly, Brit Invasion harmonies, jazz, country, and the kitchen sink. But no blitzkrieg bash. Not a shred of angst. Keeping in mind *Hit List*'s editorial opinion that, for all its eclecticism, 'London Calling' is somehow a lesser work than the CLASH's duller, more conservative sounding set, 'Give 'Em Enough Rope', it's not likely that I'm in the right place to be hyping a band that has always seemed to me the logical successors to the Lovin' Spoonful, albeit with jazz leanings.

But there they were on stage the other night, tearing the house down as easily as ever. NRBQ ran through a set of their "greatest hits" (big crowd faves), plus less ecstatically received samplings from their latest album (another self-titled LP and a good but typically inconsistent offering; they are infinitely superior live than on record). Terry Adams remains a great comic force and, as keyboardist, a truly manic musician. Sure, some of his humor is corny beyond belief but, first and foremost, he's a lunatic onstage and a damn real rocker. For a guy in his fifties, Terry's got it all over his peer group. While the Stones are my all-time favorite group, 30+ years into his career with NRBQ this guy ranks as cooler than all those old prunes combined (plus he still sports a Brian Jones haircut, which I can appreciate even if mine fell out years ago).

In these bleak rock 'n' roll times, it's reassuring to know that at least one of the aging greats has managed to balance self-preservation with honest to goodness credibility, remaining firmly committed to fun. Support these guys. They're more deserving than anyone you could name.

Catching up with NRBQ is one highlight of a particularly satisfying 10-day stretch, which also included a rare (and sloppy but enthusiastically received) guest spot on the radio a few nights ago, at WXYC, UNC-Chapel Hill; incidentally, the very same station where I first heard the Stooges back in the 70's. What a blast getting to play dozens of 60's garage-punk records, and related faves, like the early Stones, Yardbirds, Syd-era Floyd, Alice Cooper, the aforementioned Wildweeds, Wilson Pickett, etc. A week earlier, I got the nod to pen liner notes for a hip upcoming reissue, and last night I scored a copy

of the impossibly rare 'On the Run with the Fugitives' LP...for a mere \$3.99 (which left me with enough do re mi to score a 12-pack of Pabst).

Also worth noting was the delivery of a bunch of great promos. From Sundazed, I received two phenomenal 180 gram vinyl packages; a beaut of a Byrds rarities comp, 'Sanctuary' (all '65-'67), and a reissue of the essential Gene Clark and the Gosdin Brothers (practically the great lost Byrds album, as it features ex-frontman/chief songwriter Clark backed by former bandmates and released simultaneously in '67 with another Byrds highpoint, 'Younger Than Yesterday'). On the punk side o' things, Dionysus sent via my old address in Upstate NY (so it took awhile longer to get here) a killer 45 reissue of the '66 fuzz-

JUKE BOX JURY

by Jeff Jarema

fest, "Lovin' Just My Style" by the Caravelles. According to the ace, informative sleeve, these guys used to battle it out regularly with the Spiders (pre-Alice Cooper) and at one point even included pre-AC Neal Smith.

After years of dodgy repackages, the New York Dolls get a spectacular 21-song set of '73 studio demos, thanks to Norton Records. This has everything, and the sound is superb. The best tribute elpee since the Sam the Sham 'Turban Renewal' set is again on Norton, but this time the subject is chicken. "Poultry in Motion" collects extra-crispy crudity with all-Chicken titles from Hasil Adkins, drawn from 45 years of tapes!

The Young Rascals (pre-Nehru) qualify as one of the tightest R&B-inclined combos of all-time.

Come to think of it, their most revved-up rhythms sound an awful lot like watered down attempts at Bobby Freeman's "C'mon and Swim". That tune just murders. It's been on my jukebox since day one, and will not be bumped any time soon. Now, Big Beat has compiled all Bobby's dance floor maulers on a fully-packed CD (titled after the hit).

For all their effort, Big Beat has had less success with their latest garage band

round-up, "The Sound of Young Sacramento". As a point of reference, the cover versions of "I Want To Be Your Driver", popularized by the Blues Project, and Buffalo Springfield's "Do I Have To Come Right Out And Say It" (on both counts, the names of these imposters escape me) illustrate the inconsistency of this collection. The former features appropriate guttural yapping, but the latter imitation is insipidly lame (and sounds more like the Lettermen). One consumer's opinion: I would rather listen to an 18-cut all-killer, no-filler abridged comp than one of these fattened, flaccid 30-track endurance tests. Then again, this kinda reissue is targetted towards completists, a strange group that wouldn't have me as a member, anyway.

Next issue, my master list of every 45 rpm jukebox single that needs to be reissued. ⊕

***In these bleak rock 'n' roll times,
it's reassuring to know that at
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these guys.***



MONKEYWRENCH

An interview with the Monkeywrench

by Chad Hensley

Once upon a time, Mark Arm met Tim Kerr in Austin, Texas. Seems Mr. Mudhoney was pretty keen on Poison 13, a mid '80s punk band Kerr had once been a member of. Kerr was so stoked to discover this that he told Arm about a batch of unrecorded Poison 13 songs. It didn't take long before Arm and fellow Mudhoney member Steve Turner were on the horn with their friend Tom Price. Back in the day, Price's band the U-Men had spent a summer in Austin and had come moseying back to Seattle playing Poison 13's "One Step Closer". So the four of them, along with Martin Bland, decided to record some songs.

A short stint later, the Monkeywrench's "Clean as a Broke Dick Dog" was released on Sub-Pop in 1992. A collection of soulful, ferocious tunes, the album was a powerhouse of blues punk ditties. Before all was said and done, the Monkeywrench played three shows and then went their separate ways.



Now, besides the fact that Arm and Turner were in Mudhoney, they had also been members of Green River. Price just happens to play guitar with Gas Huffer, another Pacific Northwest favorite. In addition to being a founding member of Texas' seminal skatepunk band the Big Boys, Kerr's roster of credits include the aforementioned Poison 13, Bad Mutha Goose, Jack o' Fire, and the Lord High Fixers. Besides his rompin' stompin' guitar fuzz, he also likes to tweak the knobs. So far, he's recorded bands like the Makers, Fireballs of Freedom, and Sugar Shack, to name only a few. Last but not least, Bland has been in Lubricated Goat and is in Bloodloss with Arm.

In the blink of an eye, it's suddenly the year 2000. Deciding that the time is right once again, the Monkeywrench hook up. The result is "Electric Children" on Estrus, and it's as if eight years haven't passed at all. This time the boys have written all new material, except for a few classic covers. Even better, the band is going to play several live performances in Seattle, Austin, England, and Japan. The angry, blues-drenched melodies are back, just as raw and exciting as the first time around.

Chad Hensley: How did the Monkeywrench get started?

Mark: Mudhoney was on tour playing in Austin. Someone said "That's Tim Kerr over there!" I was, like, "No shit". I went up to him and started talking about how much I liked Poison 13.

Tim: We started talking and it just kind of came out that the last incarnation of Poison 13 had never recorded. Mark took the ball and went from there. He got all the people to play. We got Tom to play guitar because, besides playing guitar, he'd also seen Poison 13 live, so he was the obvious choice. The U-Men lived in Texas for nearly a summer in a bus between Chris Gates' house and a funeral home, where Daniel Johnson wrote the song "Funeral Home". As long as they were staying there, there were crazy shows all night, and the following morning there'd be people laying in the streets and asleep in the parking lot. When there was actually a funeral going on, the funeral home workers would have to come out and wake up all of these crazy characters and clean up the area.

CH: Was there a preconceived idea of what the Monkeywrench was going to sound like?

Mark: Definitely, on the first record. It was set in stone. Most of the songs were songs that Poison 13 had been doing.

Tim: It was all the songs that I had written. I wrote all the words to "Look Back" and "Angel Heart". Then there was a lot of stuff that Mike [Carroll] had written the words for, but the trouble was that there was only one cassette from that whole period of time and it was a really bad recording from Liberty Lunch, so you



couldn't understand what Mike was singing about at all. When this all came to pass, it was kind of weird at first for me. I kept thinking that it was going to be strange to have Mark rewrite what Mike had already written, and I wondered what Mike was going to think when he heard it! But then I realized that if this comes out and we say something about Mike, maybe people will go back and try to find Poison 13 stuff. That's pretty much what happened. So we sent the music to Mark and let him fill in the words we didn't know. Monkeywrench was pretty much supposed to be done after that first album. It was definitely more like the Poison 13 thing was.

CH: Do you have a favorite song from the first album?

Mark: Uhhhhh...

Tim: Careful, careful.

Mark: I would probably say "Look Back", "I'm Blown", and "Bottle Up & Go". Gee, I guess that's not really one song. (laughter)

Tim: I think the first one is a pretty great record. I'm pretty happy about it.

Mark: "Bottle Up & Go" already had the first



verse and chorus written, so I just kind of moved it in a more deranged direction.

CH: What about the song "The Story As I Was Told"?

Tim: I wrote that one. There was this little period of time when we first heard the Pogues. The drummer for Poison 13 could play the mandolin and sing that really high bluegrass stuff. So we were going to start up an old fucked up bluegrass band and kind of do what the Pogues were doing, but then punk it out. Mike was going to sing, and Jim was going to play mandolin and sing. So we practiced one time and learned a Woody Guthrie song. I started writing the words, but we sort of dropped the ball and that was that. But when Monkeywrench all came together, I started going back through stuff and trying to find other material, and then came across that. What's really great is that when they put the thing out in Japan, they took the lyrics and translated them into Japanese, then translated them back into English to put them on the CD booklet. What happens is that you end up these really crazy combinations. One line from

"I don't even know if there are any Mudhoney fans left! I would assume that if someone gets Mudhoney, they could get Monkeywrench easy enough."





this song is about a fight going on and fists flying in the air, but when the words got translated from Japanese back to English it turned into a song about piss flying through the air. (laughter)

CH: Do you think Mudhoney fans get the Monkeywrench?

Mark: I don't even know if there are any Mudhoney fans left! I would assume that if someone gets Mudhoney, they could get Monkeywrench easy enough. **Tim:** I don't think there really is that much difference at all. **Mark:** There's a difference that comes out with different people playing the instruments. **Tim:** But the spirit is pretty much the same thing, albeit with a little more feedback.

CH: How many times did the band play live after the first album?

Mark: Three. The fourth show was Garage Shock in Bellingham in 1999.

CH: What was the spark that got the new record rolling?

Mark: There'd been talk about it from that time on. We'd see Tim in Seattle or Austin and

we'd talk. It all fell into place really easily this time.

Tim: When we would see each other, we'd all talk about it because we'd had a really great time. It's a band, of course, but it's also kind of this "thing" that happened, since we're all a bunch of really great friends. So it has something else to it, and involves something more. This time, on my side, I didn't really know they were still that interested. I got a call from Steve. It was during Garage Shock, and I had to go to Seattle to record the Fireballs of Freedom and the Quadrajets. This was a two-week period where I had one day when I didn't have to do anything. Steve called up and said, "Hey, Mark and Tom want to play." I responded, "Okay, cool." But when we played at Garage Shock on such short notice, we couldn't even do a whole set.

Mark: We had only learned six songs, and we played 'em all in fifteen minutes!

Tim: But we had a really great time.

CH: I understand the band is going to be touring with Pearl Jam in Europe?

Mark: We are going to London at the end of July. We're doing two shows on our own with the Country Teasers, the Nomads, the Alchemists, and a bunch of other bands. Then

we'll do two more shows, opening up for Pearl Jam at Whimbley Arena. That gig is basically paying for our entire trip.

CH: What's up, Tim? You're usually kind of opposed to playing gigs like that.

Tim: Well, we'll see what happens. The biggest thing I am opposed to about this stuff is that it is not any fun. It sucks. There are usually eight or nine guys running around barking out orders, telling you to do this and do that and you've only got this many minutes. There comes a point when it becomes so big that you really aren't playing to anybody. People are so far away from the stage, and you sure as hell can't be handing your guitar to anybody.

CH: When you first brought up playing with Pearl Jam, what was Tim's reaction?

Mark: I think Steve was the one who brought it up and had to talk Tim into it. Mudhoney has opened for Pearl Jam a couple of times. Steve went to high school with Stony. We played in this band Green River with Stony and Jeff, so we've known them for a long time. They treat us nicely and, from what I've heard, they treat everybody else nicely as well. Whenever they have some band open for them, like the Murder City Devils, they've gone out of their way to surround themselves with people who are really nice. That's a very strange thing at that level in the rock biz. **Tim:** I respect these guys enough because I've always thought what they were doing was really great. Plus, it is pretty hilarious to say you played at this big place before zillions of people.

Mark: Yeah, in no time we'll have Tim eating caviar and snorting cocaine, just like the rest of us. (laughter)

Tim: I'm a person just like you, but I've got better things to do... (laughter)

CH: Then the band will be going to Japan?



Mark: That's in September. In August, we're playing at the Las Vegas Shakedown.

Tim: It looks like we're pretty much going to be doing stuff on a regular basis now, but they'll be kind of spread out a little bit. We've already started writing new material. We're doing a song live that's not on anything at this point.

CH: Are the Lord High Fixers done for?

Tim: Well, there's one more record coming out.

Mark: Do you think Mike's going to hang it up for good?

Tim: No. Ever since the last record, he's been really happy. It's cool. I think it has a lot to do with Julie and his personal life. He's really in good spirits. Keith from the Circle Jerks has this adult form of Diabetes that's really, really bad. They're going to do a compilation of Circle Jerks songs by other bands and give him the money. They wanted to know what bands he wanted on it. Slayer and the Lord High Fixers will be among them, so it will be crazy. We recorded "Back Against the Wall", which was pretty hilarious. At this stage in my life, I have no idea what the hell is going to happen next. I like doing Monkeywrench a whole lot. It's really great to see Mark and Steve onstage and grinning. I can't figure out if they're grinning at me or just having a great time.

Mark: The only reason we play is so we can laugh at Tim. (laughter)

CH: Do you have a favorite song from the new album?

Mark: The one song I think doesn't match up to the rest of them is "From Now On". Other than that, I really like all of them.

CH: Are any of the songs taken from personal life experiences?

Mark: I choose not to answer that. (laughter)

CH: What do you guys think about Christian Hardcore?

Mark: I went to a Christian high school, so I have this really knee-jerk reaction to that kind of stuff — more than I should. Thinking for yourself doesn't really seem to have a whole lot to do with organized religion.

Tim: The same thing happened with some hippies who got into the whole Jesus Freak movement; this is the same deal for punks who feel that there's something lacking in their lives. To me, though, if you really enjoy life that's spiritual. It has to do with your own take on life. If you're totally enjoying what's always going on around you, it really is kind of a spiritual thing.

CH: What's going on with Mudhoney these days?

Mark: We just recorded a couple of songs for this online MP3 free download company. Wayne Kramer [ex-MC5] came up to produce a

song, and ended up playing bass on three tracks and lead guitar on one. As long as there's a way for artists to get paid for what they do, the MP3 thing doesn't bother me. In the music business, the musicians are always the last to get paid. I had a long, long talk with Wayne Kramer about this, and he had a pretty good rap on the whole thing. He's an amazingly non-bitter person for someone who has been screwed over by the music industry for twenty-five years.

CH: In retrospect, how has the Seattle music scene of the early '90s really affected things now?

Mark: It produced a whole new generation of bitter, cynical thirty-year-olds, and it also made people think of music as a career option.

People started to think, "I could either work for a computer company or I could be a rich rock star. It's that easy." Both are trains of thought that I cannot relate to. The utter bitterness and cynicism of these guys who thought they should have gotten their due but didn't quite get it is astonishing. For me, music has always been a weird, happy accident.

Tim: To this day, the only reason I'm doing this is for myself. It's something that just comes out. I have a job. I don't have to worry about playing music for money. The most important thing for me is to create stuff and get it out so people can hear it. When you get involved with a bigger label, you have to work with a bunch of other people you can't relate to.

Mark: But we've never really run into any of that kind of stuff.

Tim: We did in Bad Mutha Goose.

Mark: Mudhoney got signed right after Nirvana did. Those people realized they had absolutely no idea of what was going on or what the next big thing was. So, they reasoned, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." They left us alone until the last record. It was pretty obvious we weren't making them any money at that point. It is such a huge bureaucracy that there are too many people you have to deal with, only a handful of whom really have a clue. The rest of them are thinking, "What the fuck are you guys all about?" They just don't get it. And they never really will.

Tim: The other thing that is bad about this is that in the business world, everybody is going constantly. They're all frantically moving around looking for more money. What will happen is that a band will get signed by somebody that is totally getting everybody off on the music at his company, then that person will leave. At that point you'll end up with some guy in charge who has no idea what's going on. That's what happened to the Butthole Surfers. The guy who signed them later took off to join another company.

CH: Tell me about your experiences recording other bands?

Tim: It's fun. I like helping people out. I don't really like to say that I'm producing



things because of all the baggage that's attached to it. And I only record stuff that I really like. Once again, I have a job. It's gotten to the point that I could probably record other bands and make a living off of it, but I don't want to rely on that for money. Then you might have to make a decision you don't want to in order to pay the rent. This way, I get to do stuff that I really like and if they can pay me, cool. If they can't, I'm not that worried about it. I don't think of it as work, but it definitely is. There are times when I'll come out of these things and be completely exhausted. It's just like skating or playing guitar. You don't really realize you are developing a skill. You just enjoy doing it. The first time, this band the Cavemen asked me to go in and help. Then, a hardcore band called Forefront contacted me. It didn't really turn into anything serious until Sugar Shack approached me. At that time, we hadn't even done the first Monkeywrench record. Sugar Shack wanted to call their album "Bring Me the Head of Mark Arm". I didn't know Mark at the time, but I thought it was a great title. If Mark took the title in the friendly, satirical spirit that motivated it — you know, in that old punk rock sense where a band is saying "hey" and acknowledging somebody's influence — then I thought it was cool. But the band got too scared to do it. That was actually the first record I got paid for recording. When the responsibility began to sink in, I got Spot to come in and make sure I wasn't going to fuck it up.

CH: What exactly are your day jobs?

Mark: I work for Fantagraphics. I ship porno comics. I'm a smut peddler. (laughter)

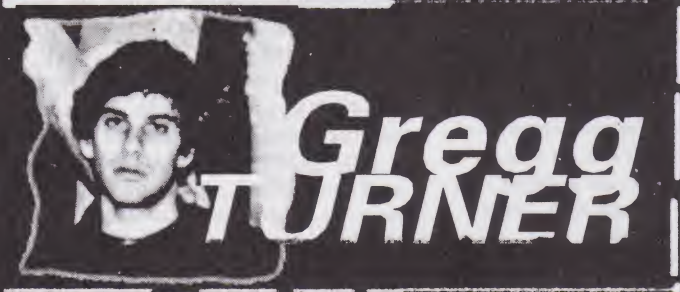
Tim: I work for the library at the University of Texas, doing computer graphics and other stuff. It's really great. ☺



Archival PUS: Fear and Loathing In The Middle of Nowhere

The colors of pus are green, yellow and red (= blood pus). Like a stop signal: Go, slow down, STOP, dude!

Why pus? Why not? Pus is always good. Nevertheless, let's construct the picture: Next to a mound of triassic topsoil, deep in the heart of South Central Utah, red rock, looming limestone spires, not a tortured soul within miles, rattlesnakes, petrified wood (the reason I was there). But the tape/cdee player in the rental car had long ago



conked out somewhere near Farmington, NM and annoying radio intrusions, then infrequent, now a painful consistency. Nothing I could do. Finally, FM vomit disguised as a CLASSIC ROCK station (you fill in the call numbers) wakes the walking dead and I couldn't turn it down or off. And it gets louder, sometimes fades out, but most of the time just blares away.

"Take It Easy", indeed. I did not.

But let's digress to metaphor (at one point, parked next to a dessicated sump of bright green clay dirt, I drifted, faded out, dreamed. The dream was an abridged version of a story I know to be true. It's called "A Cup of Pus."

A CUP OF PUS

Painter friend of mine who useta live in Taos (New Mexico), decided that encroaching urbanization of the this tourist one-stop in the northern part of the state too much (lately anyway) to take — comparative anyway to the sleepy little hippie hollow that (originally) beckoned his body and bones from L A some twenty years ago. So he upped and moved an hour west (of Taos) to an even sleepier little painter-place called Tres Piedras (not to be confused with The Monster of Piedras Blancas, where rampaging fish-monster decapitates heads of village people and tosses freshly severed specimens on the iceberg and romaine of

the produce section of a local mom and pop grocery !!). And here he continued to paint.

But after some time, reached a creative brick wall — wasn't at all pleased with the textures of the paints he was using, nor terribly fond of paint, per se, as a medium. Looking for a "different viscosity," he would say. So that 's the END of the story. Here's the beginning.

Well, maybe it was 8 months prior to alla this, there were nieces, two of 'em — one twelve and one fifteen, who came to visit from Petaluma, CA (egg capital of the west, my sources tell me). Now the arrangement they'd hashed out, so as not to interfere with uncle's creative juices on canvas (or otherwise) or maybe just deflecting juice interference period, was that they'd hang out in the main house, catch the tube, internet, video games — chase beaver, do laundry (?), while unc logged artist time in the studio down the road. At night they'd all be together, tell ghost stories, parasite stories, and drink lots of coffee!! And that's the beginning of the story.

Here's the middle part: as alluded to earlier, he'd been on the veritable wiperag for many many months tryin to figure out the suitable, but mucho elusive paint medium. Inspecting the desert bush for wild solvents, whatever. And in the process, he incurred very nasty cactus wound, which then in turn, cherried up to a plum-sized boil, purple on the outside, oozing aggressively from within. Astute he was, and in this state of astuteness, he began draining and irrigating juices of this glistening abscess into an old tin cup — that is, he sampled and collected the pus-drippings. The viscosity was good, it felt immediately right on both the small and large brushes — strokes to the canvas weren't bad at all either. Only problem was the quantity he was able to harvest from the singular wound — it couldn't support the the amount of stuff he needed to complete the still life that he'd been busy with. so this is why, maybe, over a period of time, he suffered continued misfortune with stray cacti needles — but then again this provided for greaer viscosity. When he wasn't experimenting with combos of diff wound secretions, he'd store the excess in the fridge (more viscosity still!!).

Which brings us to the 2nd middle part of the tale: nieces were hungry, one day, video game caloric requirement demands copious rewards and treats. So a Seach and Destroy mission in the kitchen uncovers old choc cake — but they DID NOT ENJOY AT ALL the small serving cups of Creme Brulee

next to the lowfat milk.

Why on earth didn't he use sugar or honey (maple syrup) — cos who'd ever heard of fermented-tasting custard. It coated the tongue too.

Now I was deep in the midst of alpha-wave trance-state pus musings, here in the dead center of this weekend's gonzo trek to the nether regions. You might ask, what exactly brought you to PUS,

Gregg? And that's a fair question — imagine 9 hours of driving, searing heat, and UNSTOPPABLE PROGRAMMED CLASSIC ROCK STATION that appeared and disappeared like the unwritten Stephen King novel (you fill in the details).

It'd been along haul from Hanksville to Escalante. And then you fight this losing battle of jockeying with the volume on/off/on/down/off/up knob, until the knob squirts off the dashboard and you cannot stop the intrusion of chords to these Republican-convention classic-rock standards. And this

...imagine 9 hours of driving, searing heat, and UNSTOPPABLE PROGRAMMED CLASSIC ROCK STATION that appeared and disappeared like the unwritten Stephen King novel (you fill in the details)

bombardment of sonic horror was at once, honestly, we're not pulling any punches here, compelling and repulsive beyond what you'd ever venture to imagine. Bruce Diff of Triple X Records describes this genre of song-bite dogfood as "Watergate Era" muzik — but certainly there was some pre- and post-Water over and under the bridge here as well. Each song seemingly followed the one ahead of it, and I absorbed it all like a shill boxer taking no less than the right amount of set-up body shots and glancing jabs. Back, tho, to pus. cos pus is what is, was, and always will be, and so I offer, to you, the spectrum of classic rock pus in action:

GREEN PUS: this is the stuff you'd never in a googolplex number of years find yourself craving to sample, the 10 to the nth replay that's already well worn and imbued in you weary MTV'd database (god help you). But at the same time, you could deflect the abuse — here out where T-rexers prowled and ate fat, content brontosaurus. I.e., refuge could be sought amongst the slickrock monoliths of striated sandstone and towering hoodoos, invoking the most casutic Ed Abbey invective, seeee...then this radio issue could fade in the dusk. So we're talking, tick tocking. Talking Heads? Not in the program (not a loss anyway). Grimmer reality — standard Zep/Stones drek. Drek, not at it's very lowest common denominator, or even least common multiple, but drek no three ways about it. Elton John is Green Pus, Chrissy Hynde has GP moments, and Sheryl Crow is very messy, pussy, and green.

YELLOW PUS: where it all stats to unravel. **TOM PETTY** is yellow. Mr Y-PUS himself, this self-righteous human hemorrhoid, brays like a tweaked donkey with prickles up the putz. Then comes Billy Joel, then Jerry Garcia and David Bowie. Now the onslaught is becoming well-defined. Yellow is a whiter shade of pale. I swig what remains of my canteen in the heat, I do not want to die amidst a haze of yellow pus.

RED P-P-P-PUS: This is it. What I heard and it was something laws should passed so no-one else could or would ever hear again. **THE GODDAMNED RED FUCKING PUS.** And so that you won't have to endure a catalog of marathon rouge pus tirade, I've narrowed it down to just the most absolute **ROTTEN** pus-sucking blowfish. This could be controversial in that you will, no doubt, have your own candidates. I argue that the ones listed here span the entire gamut of RP samples.

1) **HEART.** Bottom of the abyss. The underside of the algae. They are the rejected dental plaque your dental floss missiles to the mirror. They are the diarrhea stains that won't come off the inside of the toilet bowl from a month ago. The Gargle Sisters, that's the names of these chubster Canuck Led Zeppelin groupies, and if that's true they shoulda been content to keep it backstage with the boys doing gargle duets. "Magic Man's" lead vocal sounds (from the vantage point of the year 2000) like what a dingleberry would have to say if it could speak, talk, or sing (but not this bad). This band carries the torch for every cheap rat-bastard cliché under the banner of starfucker bombast. Heart is deep-dish **RED RED, RED P-U-S.** No doubt, just P-U too.

2) **TED NUGENT.** "Cat Scratch Fever" sucked pumice to begin with, 3 decades once upon a tyme ago. Why, back then in that era of gee-tar jack-off masters, was this megalomaniacal twit ascribed any aesthetic talent or prowess? Well, in fairness, as metalloid fury goes (went), his band the Amboy Dukes (not to be confused with he Albuquerque Dukes, who're on

their way to Portland anyway) were 60's uptight raucous in a way that was defiantly discordant to the long-haired, dope and peace/luv ethos of that day. Nevertheless, I defy you to name me your fave A. Dukes toon and hum a few bars. And just as quickly as the novelty of this wears off, so does Ted. His "Watergate era" 6-string scale aerobics waxed even less inventive than the next schmuckin line trying to emulate the same hacked diatribe. (I once reviewed a NUGE elpee in *Creem* Magazoon, and scripted the piece in the form of a **DEAR TED** letter: "Dear Ted, maybe you should try practicing on a Gibson Melody Maker as these are very good guitar to learn on." Was told by my editor that Mr. I-Hunt-Venison demanded to know my whereabouts so I could be tracked and skewered). But...alla this prob wouldn't warrant the dreaded red-pus certification (after all he's not the **VERY WORST** of all the lead-axe (premature) maxturbators. Jesus, where would Sammy Hagar or Eddie VH fit in? But here's the tweak: Recent attempts to resurrect (amplify?) this dimwit's image, the NRA icon representation and the "if-you-can't-speaka-the-language-then-you-gotta-go notwithstanding, we must realize this is one **MANLY MAN** you just hafta root for — that some AIDS-infested greaser with (of course) A **BIG**

BIG GUN, sneaks up on Mr. Buckskin and forces a wickedly scabby schlong up big hunter's gunsight. **ANNND** the lesioned loser bugfucker can be no-one else but, you guessed it, Charlie Heston!

3) The Grand Prize goes to perhaps **THEE** most offal and bone-chilling beast to seep from the sump of the shadows of **ROCK CLASSICDOM** (because this imbecile couldn't seep from anywhere else, here, then, or after). Where was I with this thought in the travelogue scheme of things? Why I was circling through the petrified forest loop east of Escalante, grooving to the imperious mounds of ancient triassic Chinle layer of green and red dessicated clay earth (> 200

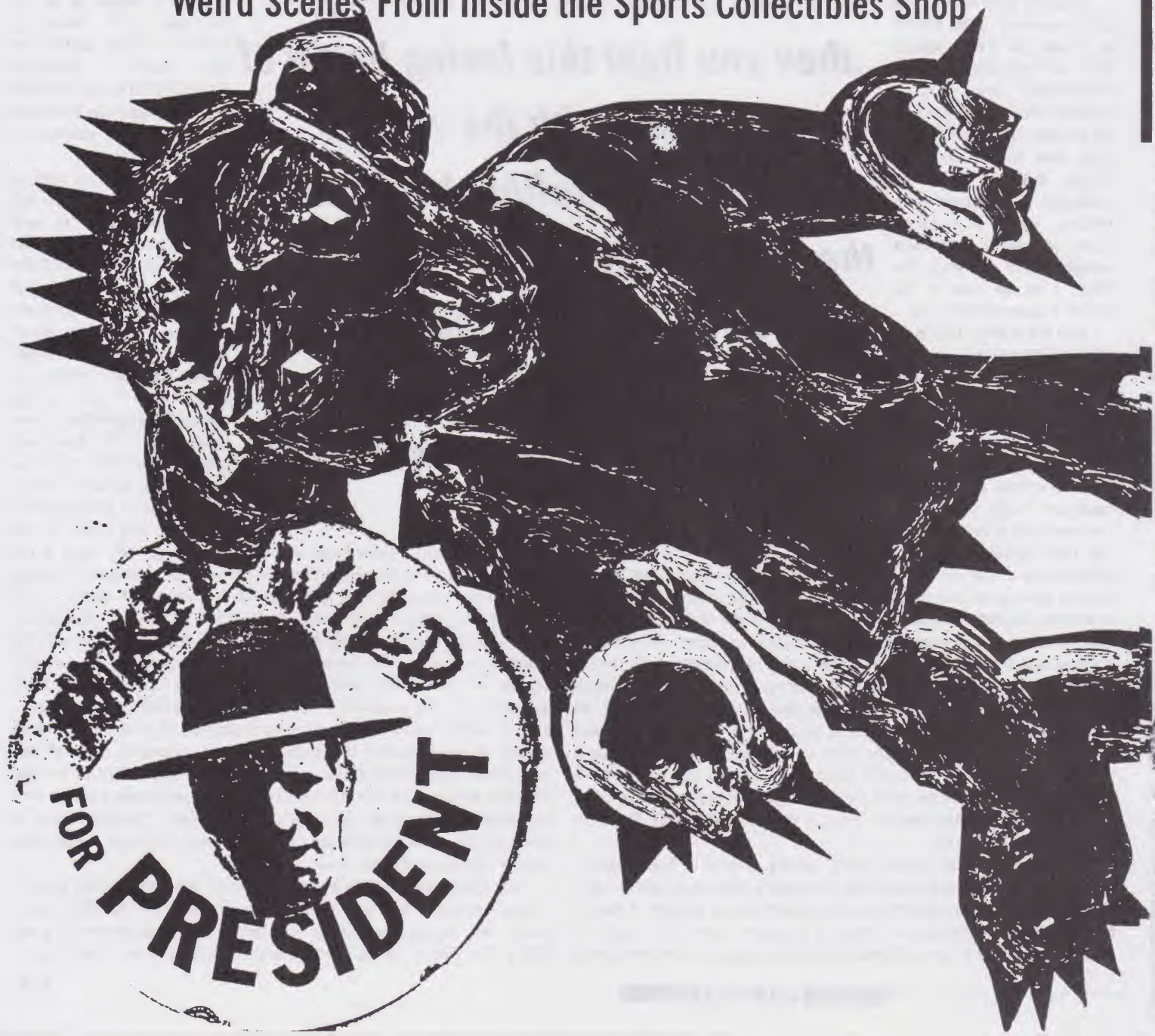
million year sold). Radio noise was waning, fading, off? Could it be? Nothing to permeate the consecration of the vista, but suddenly the damn thing (unprovoked) **ERUPTS** loud and like a firehose run amuck: "I'VE GOT TWO TICKETS TO PARADISE, BABY, TWO TICKETS TO PARADISE" Holy fucking fanged child of the Holy Father, dear mother of weeping Mary, now unabashedly being shupped into submission by Lucifer's conjure of Paul Anka meets Tony Danza. Our orifices must bleed spontaneously and profusely in concert with the assault on the senses — how could Hell spell a deeper, more seething offering of rancid semen on a piece of white toasted bread, than this cop-procreated mass of self-esteemless colon polyp'd humanity otherwise called **EDDIE** fucking **MONEY?** But there's a **BONUS.** We have (right as we speak) a classic two-fer: "Baby Hold On to Me, the future's not ours to see..." Heavvvv-eeee. So now I pound on the facade of the dash and console, and more knobs break off and fall next to the gas pedal.

Dear **GOD:** Beat me senseless with a douche bag, fuck me with a moldy banana, cram your E. Coli chicken lives up my hiney, but **DO NOT,** I say, I plead, I beg, beseech, and borrow your benevolence: Stop the bombing and killing. Free Wayne Kramer. Your nieces go back to Petaluma. Fuck Me. ☺

**...then you fight this losing battle of
jockeying with the volume
on/off/on/down/off/up knob, until
the knob squirts off the dashboard
and you cannot stop the intrusion
of chords to these Republican-
convention classic-rock standards.**

MIKEY

I Was Punk B4 U Were Punk: The Story of the Mikey Wild:
AKA: The Father of Philly Punk Rock
Weird Scenes From Inside the Sports Collectibles Shop





The following passage I scrawled dates back to the first night I spent with Mikey Wild- late autumn '99. He conned \$5 out of me then split. I've left

grammatical errors stand as is to accurately capture the frenzied punk rock demon he invoked before a crowd of rocker-humans packed shoulder-to-shoulder within an anonymous Providence, RI

warehouse. Mikey ain't my hero. you gotta be a sick-o to pedestalize this cretin. i do look to him for

advice on matters such as muff-diving and crucifixion and other matters. his erudition in trash makes him much better than the lizard king and g.g. and all those other clowns

getting up there and putting in their two-cent worth. but, he ain't a hero. he's a sex-crazed little gnome with some disgusting habits and a tendency for spit and snot to slip from his porous countenance and down onto his red satin bowling jacket. he's one bad-ass human being with a head full of great tunes and severe mood swings. he's the mayor of south street. what kind of populace would elect such an individual? can they be trusted to sanely carry on the american democratic process? his story is as muddled as his hair. he'll tell you that he's been playing punk rock for 25 years, that he's been hooked on junk, that he has buttslammed numerous men. i saw him eyeing a cat in the corner of this dungeon. i thought he was gonna jump that little fur ball right then and there and

set it upon his cock. i'm not going to tip-toe around mikey's run-in with shock therapy and his counter full of prescription pills. some i hear are the same pills that Dahmer took while in prison. sure, he's fucked in the head. he can't remember mundane shit like my name. the guy who just gave him \$5! but, he's as real as you or me, more so. he wanted to hit on this chickie and so he did. just like that. we all wish we possessed such inhibitions. well, when he found out that she had a boyfriend he was worried that he wronged him. shit. nice guy.

WILL!

FUN. The rawk can't survive without it and we can't survive without the new Mikey Wild record, *I Was Punk B4 U Were Punk*. Please read the following screed as the first and final document on this duke or sage, if you will, of sleaze. You'll soon learn too much about this corrupted nymph's secret life of punk rock debauchery. One riddled with fables wherein the moral remains one consistent point: fuck, suck, bite, sweat and rock until you collapse from exhaustion onto a freezing cement floor glazed with a sea of beer foam where cigarette butts and exposed wires float about like ocean animalia.

The past decade easily produced more dismally pretentious interpretations and derivatives of hard rock music than any previous decade- hands-down and bar-none, bitches. All you crust-tees in the spikes and boots from the stoned 70's moaning back then about the glut of pouty and flat-chested and corn-colored hair folkie singer-songwriters weeping for their respective inner children all named, oddly enough, progfusiondoobie, were at least blessed with some authentic star struck douche bags who weren't afraid to turn their...hmmm...vision and talent into records of overblown remorse-rock replete with symphonies from London and 10-string bassists from somewhere south of the Bahamas and, maybe, some juicy

bumper-butt ghetto soulsters echoing these crackers' every word. Sure, sludge moistened with Judy Collins' tears mired the decade. At least, you didn't experience all this. I was a 15-year-old shithead in 1990. I am now...wait...I'm counting on my fingers...25? I have dedicated my life to wasting unhard-earned money on records by any band or dude or chick who rocks with inspiration, gusto and a preternatural contempt for good taste and classy crap. Thousands of records sat in finger-flipping way, almost preventing me from discovering the Electric Eels and Icky Boyfriends and Sockeye and Thomas Jefferson Slave Apartments and Skull Control and, hell, even Zeke: emo-/homo-core, the burgeoning and too-serious hip-hop underground, Rachel's, Tortoise, grunge, brooding/raging rap 'n' metal, IDM: intelligent dance music, indie rock, indierockfreejazz, indierocknoise, freejazznoise, 60's garage comps, 50's rockabilly comps, 70's pornosoul comps, WOP cowboy movie comps, Chicago-bred elevator musicÖhuffÖpuffÖhuff. I need to catch my breath. The highly anticipated utopia where Joe American finally receives a chance to play artist-for-the-day because the technology is just so darn cheap and user friendly never happened. No shit. But, we never bargained for so many self-serving opportunists to storm the gates of hard rock and rape-pillage-torture in a kind of passive but yet aggressive manner. Did We? Chorus: Hell No! That's only a

fraction of the story. Watering down the goods for consumption has always been the rule and shall forever remain the rule here in America, and, soon, clear across this little shit pellet of a planet, free-falling through space like Tom-muthafuckin'-Petty. Let's reel this shit in a notch or two. The biz was in the biz of packaging decadence. Van Halen made millions. Great. At least became fat cats by leading a nation of teenage zombies to the altar of rock 'n' roll armed with nothing but a bottle of JD and records brimming with the sweet odor of little Sally's kooch after those riffs seeped down into her skin-tight Jordaches and negotiated the zipper's teeth apart. The boys upstairs marketed the myth that the rockers were outsiders, the shaman of the tribe. As shamans/magicians, they lead us spiritually. But not politically because they ultimately couldn't be trusted just like Zeus couldn't trust the mischievous Greek god Baccus. Nowadays, the same boys upstairs, at corporations like DreamWorks or independent labels like Thrill Jockey, sell the myth of the musical technician who micro-manages what audio stimuli America hears. Since the keepers of society's economic machinations allowed both myths to propagate, you might as well listen to the rockers still pushing the party. Hell, even the underground cats like The Electric Eels, who had no chance of inking a deal with MCA, believed that quality art, I mean rock 'n' roll, resided in the inherent temptations of partying with Bacchus, Pan and Dionysus.

BACCHUS, PAN, DIONYSUS FOUND DEAD

BOSTON- Sorry to dredge up some real horrible nightmares. Was I that stoned in my college years ('93-'97) to have actually dug some of this shit? Rex. June of 44! Christie Front Drive!! Sunny Day Real Estate!!!

Sure.

Now my generation just received the ideal drink to slurp down while this shit's toodling in the background. Red Bull, anyone? It's the hip power drink/vodka premix-in-a-bottle six pack tailored specifically for the i-wanna-party-but-have-to-think-of-my-figure cocktail crowd: the perfect alcoholic beverage for the health spa/Dionysian consumer in all of us.

A friend describes said drink's effect as, "your drunk but you still have a clear head and can function with clarity."

Mikey Wild, once known as Michael Delucha, was born during the 1950's, I



think. Mikey doesn't bother with historical accuracy; it's not compatible with rock 'n' roll myth-making. He plays court jester manufacturing pure bullshit incessantly. After my first 10 minutes with the guy, fact and fiction abruptly collapse into simply, Mikey's life story. Then again, the dude fried his noggin on just about every substance ever within his arms reach. His brain must surely float about in an impenetrable miasmic slobber that strangled his memory years ago.

This pervert grew up in South Philly when Italian immigrants mainly called the neighborhood home. He continues to live there. In his autobiography, *Mikey Wild The Life and Legend*, he wrote. "It all started 1955. I was born in 1955 when I was only six-years-old. My Uncle Gussy let me on his lap when the music came on the television. I used to bop near the TV and that's why I like music." We've similar recollections just like this in biographies from Loretta Lynn, Elvis Presley, Carl Perkins, Roger McGuinn, Waylon Jennings and even a dude like Alice Cooper. It's a fairly standard American folk tale. Mikey dates back to another age. You scoff, but Mikey's brand of punk rock, rich in degenerate street poetry ("Die Die Die": Die die die/Gonna git you wit' my knife/Die die die/Gonna put you on ice.) is sure-as-shit American folk music. His music deals with the essential problems of living in tattered American urban society: love, regret, madness, betrayal, revenge, hope, anger, kickin' ass, drugs abuse, etc.

It ain't Springsteen, but, then again, Mikey emerged from a lower link on the food chain than that dude. A Springsteen hero, like in the song "Cherry Darlin'", always gets it together just enough to make it down to the welfare office to pick up his check. Mikey's anti-heroes, the hookers in "Girls Standing in Line," live in the darkness of the city that Springsteen and his music fled a long time ago. These are supremely self-destructive individuals, whom even bleeding heart liberals would find trouble sympathizing with.

Both The Boss and Mikey grew up listening to 1960's pop on the radio in decaying East Coast urban centers, within a couple hours of each other, in fact. But, The Boss chose the righteous path (In punk, Strummer chose heaven; Rotten chose hell.). It's not the righteousness, though, that makes his music boring. That's an entirely different issue along with the, tight dungarees, striped tank-top, greasy beard and beret look, that The Boss and Little Steven made popular. But, where The Boss seeks spiritual redemption

through championing the world's down-trodden (A romantic view of po' folk and all that salt-of-the-earth type shit.), Mikey proclaims that he and his heroes ride the highway to hell. Contrasting these two is unfair, though. Mikey can not pull himself together enough for an earnest push at the big time. Springsteen retains a knack for penning big-time hooks and melodies. He's a professional and master in his trade. Now that the reason for his dull music. If challenged, The Boss could never write a song as crass and despicable and essentially ALIVE as Mikey's "I Hate New York" with its nut-rattling riffage and ten commandments-like bombast: I hate New York/I hate New York/I hate New York/I hate the Mets/I Hate the Jets/I hate the Rockettes/They got bow legs/Uptown downtown the Big Apple a bore/Uptown downtown it's rotten to the core. Mikey razes the Manhattan skyline in three short minutes.

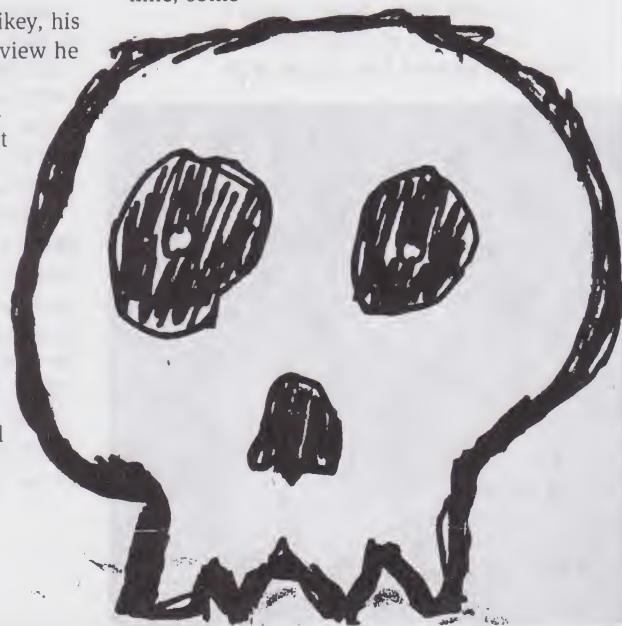
Mikey's music, as I'll explain in more detail later, reflects, with a stubborn and gut-level feeling, the gin-soaked psyches of violent characters found stumbling about from bar to crack house back to bar to curbside bed in any out-of-working-class neighborhood, which, ironically, exist in the immediate shadow of every city's sleek financial district. That's his reality and that's the reality Philly punk exploded out of in the 70's. The burbs are a dream in this world.

Back to Mikey's dossier.

In the 1960's, Mikey saw The Beatles at Shea Stadium ('65) and received SHOCK THERAPY at The Don Guanella School in Springfield, PA. Other events took place during the decade but Mikey incessantly returns to these two points. The mop tops became his favorite all-time rock band and his favorite subject to paint. Shock therapy became the standard by which all future stimulus would be measured by him. Specifics about the latter event are unattainable. Every time I talk to Mikey, his story changes. During our first interview he claimed doctors administered the treatment throughout his childhood. When he repeated that story in front of his current drummer, Ed Wilcox, whom Mikey lovingly refers to as "Eddie," Eddie said he was full of crap and that Mikey only received the treatment once. Mikey agreed but he eventually reverted back to his original version of the story. He knows good copy. Then the 1970's arrived. Mikey began playing with The Hard Ons, a local group formed by Philly legend, Alan Mann. Some



rock critics reported that The Hard Ons were Mikey's first band. After reading and re-reading the mounting pile of historical data that covers my desk about this man, I've discerned that The Hard Ons were not originally Mikey's band. Mann and others formed the group and Mikey, swiftly discovering his will to play hard rock, unofficially joined the band after jumping up on stage with them gig after gig. If The Hard Ons were as wasted as Mikey was in the pre-dawn years of punk rock then they probably didn't even notice a new singer on stage. Shortly thereafter or shortly before (Who really knows?), Mikey could begin boasting, which he does every given chance, that he has shared the stage with Lou Reed, met Andy Warhol, got stoned with Joey Ramone and got to know Ian Dury. But, Mikey's greatest success as an artist in the 1970's, and evidence that his embrace of the rock 'n' roll lifestyle is genuine and whole, came in movies. Sometime during the glam rock fad, Mikey fell for Bowie and turned homo and/or bisexual like a lot of confused and/or confused Americans at the time (Again, the little bastard told this story three or four different ways.). Mikey's fagdom stemmed from a basic need to fill holes and not leisure-time boredom. His sexual experimentation landed him a role in the porn, *Back Door To Hollywood*. Celluloid captured Mikey dipping his donger into some chick's brown eye, while at the same time, some





dude dipped his donger into Mikey's brown eye. A little while back the dude behind Bulb Records, Pete S. Larson, brought me down to Philly to interview Mikey. I was lucky enough to get the low down on his brief stint in tittie flicks.

Now, the only photos I ever saw of Mikey captured this sneering leather- and denim-clad PUNK in every classic sense of the word: tattoos, dangling cigarette, skull and crossbones shirts, flat-top, spiked hair, grimy dirty blonde mop top, scruff, studded leather bracelets and so on. He looked imposing and degenerate from every angle and pose. But that sneer said something even more sinister.

My sources informed me that Mikey is retarded or slow, but his countenance intimidated prime evil in my eyes, man. Most photos of current punk bands show utter dorks copping some bad-ass, Sid Vicious fuck-all pose almost 25 years after the fact. That's cool. But, a quiver of reticence in all their eyes betrays reservation. They're mamas' boys. Mikey's pose is vacant and at times catatonic, even. His gnarled face ripples with

painful-looking humanoid contortions. It is such a gratuitous take on the punk pose that it stops being a pose and mutates into the real deal. So, yeah, I was scared. Although Asians now inhabit many of the areas in South Philly that the Italians used to call home, the street Mikey lives on is still home to dozens of grease ball fruit and vegetable stands covering the block. Faded Italian flags hang over entranceways. Eddie, also the high priest of the band Temple of Bon Matin, led us to the glass door of a sports card and collectibles shop hidden among the produce vendors. He knocked twice on the glass door. After the sound of feet descending a flight of stairs, a bald and stout Italian gentleman with thick bifocals opens [Quick shift to present tense for good laughs.] the door. "Hello." His speech is clipped and grating like any authentic Italian-American. The fella openly wears apprehension but obviously accustomed to packs of goons looking for Mikey.

"Is Mikey here? It's Ed. Ed Wilcox." Eddie possesses a quiet, well-paced and disarming brand of speech. You could only imagine Bundy utilizing such soothing tones. "He's here, Ed. But, he's in one of his bad moods. Let me see if he wants visitors." The fella and Mikey grunt incoherently for a couple moments. Then...

Eddie. EDDIE. EDDIE. IS THE GUY WHO WANTS TO WRITE ABOUT ME WITH YOU?" A short and malleable-looking man furiously grinning and puffing a cig comes to the door amid a cloud of smoke. Mikey stands about 5' tall with a wide, stocky frame: baggy jeans, spent Nikes and stained sweatshirt. His mop used to be blond but now it's grown out and darkened. He's jovial; he's a god damn teddy bear (!) with an impatient shave and yellow teeth.

Mikey guides us across the length of the shop to a second door. Two glass showcases housing highly sought after Ken Griffey, Jr. and Derek Jeter rookie cards flank our left side. In-action statues of more famous ball players, from all three major sports, and a small shelf devoted to comics and mythical figurines, like dragons and knights, fill out the remaining space.

Back to the door at the far end: Mikey's lair. It's a dreary bedroom, living room and painters' studio all in one. The walls are cheap sheet rock covered with Mikey's paintings: Cat Smoking Cigarette, Psychedelic Beatles, Fab Four Beatles, White Album Beatles and others that resemble little girls having sex.

Mikey quickly scampers over to a table in the kitchen just beyond his bedroom. A

television next to the table blares a pro football game. I can't the teams. We begin rapping. Mikey's speech is an amalgamation of Johnny Rotten whine, loud emotional bursts that Italian-Americans generally make and a serious speech impediment patching this ugly concoction of human language together. His sentences bleed into one another when he injects well-rounded sounds such as aww and oohh and eugh into the middle of words.

A ton of shit is tossed back and forth, mainly dull blather about football, Boston (the city) and rock music. Eddie kick sparks the interview when he volunteers the info that Mikey appeared in Back Door to Hollywood. "Mikey had a brief film career about 20 years ago."

"Dirty, dirty movies." Mikey confesses with latent pride. He isn't sure whether I'm a priest or a demon, yet. He shapes his confession box countenance- a furtive but challenging little smile.

I play the game cautiously at first. What's this fiend (He keeps scurrying over to the refrigerator every five minutes to guzzle Pepto-Bismol straight from the bottle), going to do if I strike some long-hidden well of violent intentions? Am I absolutely positive that Mikey took his good-mood pills today? Shit. Look at all those prescription bottles. I can count about eight different orange vials by the sink. "Can I mention this?"

Mikey frowns.

"I would mention this." Eddie jumps in.

"No, we're not going to mention it." Mikey tenuously clams up. A war wages inside this man's uniquely constructed conscience.

He dates a girl, Chrissy (sic). He's pussy-whipped. He mentions her incessantly. As we speak, Mikey's waiting for her nightly phone call. He doesn't want to piss her off. However, this dude is pure punk rock ego. If sick and twisted stories of sexual depravity further enhance his image as rock's lead man- Mr. Wine, Debauchery and Anal Penetration- then, by all means, he'll mention it. No. Promote it! Push it! Front page headlines: FATHER OF PHILLY PUNK CAUGHT ON FILM TAKING WHAT HE CAN DISH OUT.

"C'mon. I need to mention this." I push.

"He did some porno." Coolly. Eddie doesn't wait.

"I didn't do porno. I did kiddy porn."

FLASH: I scan each face in this dimly lit kitchen. Mug shots with identification numbers scroll across the bottom of the frame.



"You did kiddy porn?" The fucker snared me within a maze of deceit. I'm a perch swallowing the enticing jitterbug lure.

"No." Eddie slackens the line.

"I did a lot of stuff." The reel begins clickÖclickÖclicking.

"He was in this film with real cats." Eddie swiftly jerks the pole back.

"And Dogs." Mikey and Eddie are succinct in their delivery.

"Bestiality? C'mon, Mikey." I stroke 'em for good copy.

"HAIRY BEAST." Mikey's lips smack the microphone as he growls. He then pauses for more Pepto-Bismol, which now sits right on the table. "I did a monkey and a gorilla, too."

"The name of the movie was Back Door to Hollywood." Eddie explains.

"What happened to it?" Blank stares across the board.

I normally wouldn't give a shit because this story, in most rockers' careers, typically revolves around some collection of lost tapes that I'm always assured are the vital sounds of unadulterated genius. But, this lost tape is actually worth not losing.

"But Mikey, tell me what happened in it." Desperation dissolves my hardened rock critic pose to a fine colloidal suspension. I'm the American junkie with lips bubbling froth. I strung myself out on smut by age 16. I am now wheedling, even pleading, for the shit. And here the story cums spurting from Mikey's orifice of sleaze...

"I did the girl and the guy went back and did it to me in the ass and stuff. That was good. I like when they put that Vaseline in there." Mikey quietly but defiantly savors his moment while milky pink bubbles seep out the corners of his mouth.

In the wake of the first full-blown punk explosion, Mikey and Mann, from The Hard Ons, put together Mikey Wild and the Mess. They emerged at time when Philly was home to a handful of great punk bands: The Stickmen, Sadistic Exploits, More Fiends and many more. I know of one 7" this band released in 1987 on Philly's Cry Baby Records (Another might exist.)- "I Hate New York" b/w "Die Die Die." These versions are faster-paced and more volatile than the ones recorded by Mikey's current band, The Magic Lanterns, for his new record. The Mess played a hybrid of hardcore, gutter punk and hard 'n' heavy FM rock (AC/DC, Sweet, Slade,

Montrose, Thin Lizzy, etc.) .

It wasn't a true hybrid, though. It's not the product of conscious genre mix ení matching. The Mess consisted of drug-addled American punks who dug anything loud, fast and obnoxious. They ain't got no truck with the politics of disparate subcultures. That shifts around so Limey punks and American emo fags can still discriminate. They lived hard lives and listened to hard music, period. Minor Threat, Throbbing Gristle, Cactus, Judas Priest- whatever sounded good while guzzling brew and beating the fuck out of your best friend's couch and everyone on it with a blow torch and an anxious switchblade.

Both of these tunes are violent hard rock offspring of Mikey's philosophy that vile, hatred fueled punk is the grandest and most beautiful expression of existence yet to be discovered by mankind. The guitar buzzes and the bass snaps from the speaker cones as Mikey wails the most frayed and overwrought Rotten cop ever recorded: Die die die/Gonna git you wit' my knife/Die die die/Gonna put you on ice/Die die die/Better hide and run/Die die die/I'll kill you before the day's done.



The Mess inevitably burned out. If the rest of the group lived as decadently as Mikey did at the time then drugs and the parasitic nature of street life whipped their asses pretty fucking hard.

The 80's became the 90's. Mikey cleaned up (very subjective), matured (extremely subjective) and went solo. In addition to playing clubs by himself with guitar and keyboards, he found time to

form and dissolve two more bands: Mikey Wild and the 3rd Graders and The Mikey Wild Generation. Then he met guitarist and hemp product advocate, Dave Kuffa, and our beloved drummer, Eddie. They put together Mikey Wild and the Magic Lanterns...

The Lanterns are Mikey's most productive outfit to date. They regularly tour up and down the East Coast and they actually put together an entire record. It collects 17 songs recorded at different studios, club dates and live radio broadcasts. Mikey wrote many of these songs over the last 25 years. It's like those so-called Merle Haggard anthologies where they contain all his greatest hits but re-recorded versions from a year before. Those suck because Merle hires the worst session musicians. Not this. Along with the Royal Trux box set, this is surely one of the most important archival projects released on American soil since Harry Smith's American Folk Anthology or The Electric Eels CD, God Says Fuck You.

In contrast to Mikey's past groups, The Lanterns' brand of punk rock exudes solid musical foundations: meter, tempo, crescendo, release, refrain. Words I have

not believed in since firing my vocal coach during high school. He said that I didn't breathe from my diaphragm.; I told him to go straight to hell.

These dudes are seasoned musicians, real fucking veterans. In keeping with Mikey's philosophy that all hard rock is good as long as it's hard, the Lanterns' sound conjures up comparisons to early Guess Who (Mikey's lewd monologues on

the spiritual necessity of loving muff would make Burt Cummings proud.), AC/DC, Sex Pistols, Electric Eels, etc. The legend has it that the suits running AC/DC label didn't know how to market them at first. Hard rock? Punk? New wave? Metal? All great bands pose this problem and so does the Lanterns' singular sound.

Guitarist Dave plays some mean chops and his timing clicks like a metronome. Instead of heroin and coke, Dave digs weed and brew. This combo of drugs is underrated by rock historians and much more reliable than smack. Shit, he might not even make the gigs if he messed with that shit. He knows just the right amounts of each to consume in order for his fingers to float fluidly from James Williamson to Johnny Thunders and on into K.K. Downing- and FranchÈ Coma-country. The Lanterns aren't about implosion at this stage the game. Mikey's weathered the storm and ready to unveil his new image that of the rock 'n' roll survivor. He's treated his body as poorly as Keith Moon and Sid Vicious treated theirs, but Mikey is hitting his stride now! For a concept like that you need a band grounded in practical applications of music like Eddie's rudiments. At each gig he sits perched

for glam and the marching beat that bands like Slade built their sounds over. This whole spiel sounds completely fucked and at first Mikey's new record did sound like a rude joke. It's a marathon in incompetence. The recording buries the songs under a blanket of boom-box-in-the-practice-space murk with ear-splitting reverb splattered across every single instrument save the thudding drums. Mikey haphazardly growls yeee-aaaaa-hhhhh and ooowwww and a-ha-ha-ha-haaa and hit it Dave throughout every single track. Frequent moments exist when Mikey begins the next verse and stops because either too much phlegm bubbled up into his throat or he realized, too late, that he wasn't even supposed to be singing.

During the introduction to "Zombies From the Grave," Mikey ignores the fact that Dave is conversing with him and proceeds to scream, "The zombies will eat your flesh and drink your human blood." And other times he's just too tired to continue singing...so...he stutters or moans to a halt and not too gracefully.

Although Mikey longs to be Johnny Rotten or even Bon Scott, his complete and singular embrace of the punk rock spirit alters some rather generic tunes ("Wet

when I recently stole my ex-girlfriend's car. A surging sense of invincibility and some chemicals motivated me to subject my ears to Mikey's tune, "God Is Dead," full blast. Mikey screams 1-2-3-4. Did painfully sounding grunts prepare me for an impending sonic assault? Nope. The band gingerly eases into a stuttering, medium-paced oompah-oompah march. Mikey returns, belligerently stepping all over his band's opening: God is dead/Shot him in the head laaaaast night/God is dead/Bullet thruuuu the head....By this point, Mikey's over-inflated dramatics inspire the Lanterns to dig their heels into the dirt for some hard rocking. Mikey's rambling sermon mutates into peculiar rhythmic device that locks in step with his cohorts. BAM: a rattling metallic pulse instantly spills from all four speakers. I just stole a car, too.

Immediately following his proclamation that we live in a world where God was just murdered in cold blood by one of his own alienated children, Mikey, in the cow-bell led rocker "S-T-U-F-F My Bunny," injects a rabbit full of his girl's urine because he needs to know if she's pregnant. This music pummels and entertains like a good hobo brawl behind the local Burger King. Are these smelly dudes hugging or struggling, bawling or bawling, laughing or crying? The beauty of this music and the hobo fight is that we're not forced to choose. All these emotions exist simultaneously (The magic of the shaman.)- joy and pain as Rob Base said. Like the shaman he is, Mikey deals in death but releases wholly positive vibes through his rhymes, sort of. You're not going get all bummed out here on some Ron House (Thomas Jefferson Slave Apartments) Midwest-I'm-bored-and-wanna-die death trip. Hell, this fucking society has tried to mellow this dude out with electricity and pills and confinement. The most punk statement he could make, which he does over and over, is simply love and enjoy life with a murderous glee and shameless glorification of violence (Cow bells and animal torture.). And with a devoted stable of female groupies and male followers as evidence, Mikey attains the same results as Manson without all the calories. And like the ultra self-conscious Mick Jagger, a brief but plaintive honesty emerges every once in a while. Mikey's rock ballad "I Was on Dope": And nuthin' really matters much to meeee/Things'll be dif-fer-ent may-be now you'll seeeee/I was on dop-eh/I freeeked [flaked?] out/I was so high-eh/I thought I could fly-eh. We've just delved into some real Wild-Horses-Marianne-Faithfull's-face-is-blue-while-I'm-



above his hand-painted double bass-drum kit with a buzzard's beak honker, bleach-blond main and male breasts that jelly about in time to the beat. Eddie doesn't cling to the back beat with single whacks to the snare drum like most punk rock drummers. He creates a propulsive rumble incorporating all kinds of different drums. This style definitely derives from his love

Dream" and "Satan Needs Head" falter.) into psychotic theater replete with visions of his own apocalypse and rebirth. He's the bad actor who with the sheer force of his enthusiasm wills everyday made-for-television pap into a unique and twisted projection of his own tortured soul.

The panoramic scope of Mikey's vision revealed itself to me like a fist to the nuts

on-the-couch-getting-my-rod-sucked-all-at-the-same-time with this obliterated slob moaning the blues because he girlie finally left him after all the crappy things he's dished out. Whether its Mikey singing this tale of woe, which might be his best songs, or George Jones or Blind Fuzzy Jenkins, the story remains relatively the same: wasted loser spoiling the only true love he'll feel deep within his soul. This chick represents Mikey's haven, man. Mikey never realized just how delicate security stands until he got so wasted that the only place left for his mind to wander was straight out of the spent shell of body it called home. Mikey caught a brief glimpse of himself from the other side. That shit freezes your soul.

Last time I floated about, I crawled underneath my bed for five straight hours and whimpered in the dark like a scared little puppy. Some techno DJ and I devoured a heaping bag full of the Iroquois-brand magical mushrooms. He busted out all that turntable crap while strobe lights flickered about and his dog attacked me. I flaked but I don't possess the talent to write a song about that glimpse. Mikey does. "I Was on Dope" is ultimately a shuck like "Wild Horses." Although Mikey sings with his heart on his sleeve he understands the implicit humor of such a soul-searching act brought about from American decadence. Partying until you destroy yourself- a uniquely American joke. Mikey croons with lead-anchored voice. At the line And nuthin' really matters much to meee. Mikey mimics those soul-wrenching, upper-register cracks in the voice that threaten Gram Parson's voice on the Flying Burritos Brothers' version of "Wild Horses." Then Mikey reaches even higher for his moment of optimism Things'll be dif-fer-ent may-be now you'll seee. The Lanterns don't approach the grandeur and fragility of Parsons or even Glenn Danzig at the end of "Some Kinda Hate," but they don't want that. This is a gritty punch-the-clock band. They don't jam; they rehearse.

Right now, you're saying, "I've heard this Jim Morrison/G.G. Allin sleaze story a million times...enough."

Valid point. But, the only route to travel in order to create great rock is to embrace the clichés of duh tradition. That, Mikey does. He dives head first into every spent joke (Like murdering Jesus and sticking it to Mary) the way he dives into a pair of little girl's panties. He squeezes 'em so tight (the clichés, not the thighs) until all the pressurized heat and mustiness mutate those has-been jokes into something brand



spanking' new. For every 1,000-year-old line like, "God is Dead" (Although the thought is old, nobody I ever knew talked about capping the Father in the skull at midnight.), Mikey cranks out ten jams with the bite of "The Devil Does it": The Devil does it/The Devil it to you/He fucks yer sister/And yer girlfriend/And yer boyfriend too/The Devil does it to your wife too/He Knows yer husband/He runs yer life too/The Devil does it/The Devil does it to you, to you, to you, to you/The Devil Does it to me. Ha! No one escapes getting' screwed in this life, not even Mikey. He's one of the not-so-common living among the common people.

Eddie once wrote of Mikey's talents, "Fuck G.G. Allin and Sid Vicious those guys could spell.," and he also explained to another rock critic, "It's easy to turn him into a medieval freak show but it doesn't do him justice." I'm guilty of perpetuating the medieval freak show simply by writing this article. My life long pursuit has been to unearth those rare individuals who act out the most

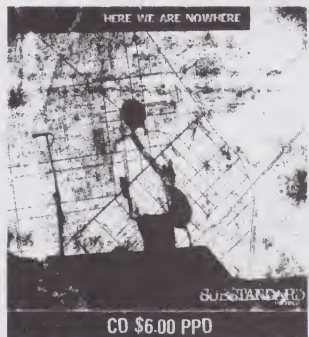
outrageous ideas floating around in my brain. Mikey leads the pack easily: drug abuse, police action, fire marshal intervention, mental disturbance, death, sexual perversion and...shit...the list is goes on and on. He'll do anything if he thinks the crowd will get a jolt from it. And I'm no different than anybody else by craving a good hammer-over-the-head when it comes to my entertainment.

In the end, digging Mikey Wild as fervently as I do is more telling of my own degeneracy than his (He's the pusher, and I'm the junkie.), which is why the joke is ultimately on me. I'm reminded of what that foxy mama Joan Didion once wrote, "good art contains certain irreducible ambiguities." ⊕

I'm a rock 'n' roll dreamer
In a rock 'n' roll world
On this rock 'n' roll planet
-Mikey Wild
(copping a Bon Scott scream...of course)

by Justin Farrar
justin_farrar@hms.harvard.edu

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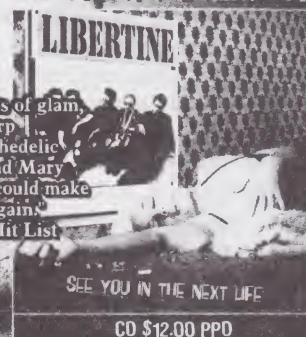
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Filled with nods to Green Day, Blink-182 and other "edgy" pop-punk bands, Sparechange's well-crafted Cargo debut contains speedy drumming, raucous guitar playing, and earthy vocals courtesy of Ryan Watts. -Cleveland Free Times

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How I Got Over

The odds were stacked against it, but rock and roll changed my life — that's its story, and that's why it beats the hell outta poetry, fiction, TV, movies, anything you care to name today that purports to give trapped people a way out. It'll find your ass, if you'll look for it. It's supposed to be dead, too, but purveyors of such theories are full of shit. Rock and roll is about outreach; everything else is just an invitation to navel-gazing, which is the last thing you need at millennium's end.

I grew up in a household where music was Mantovani, Neil Diamond, Al Martino, the soundtrack to "Camelot" (literally and metaphorically). What was worse is that it was missing that seldom-celebrated essential figure in any rock and roll-bound kid's life: a big brother who could pass down records. I also lived in a little town in southwest Missouri. The first music I heard that I liked was Sonny and Cher, and my parents bought me "Sgt. Pepper's" for my 9th birthday — neither a particularly good omen. But it found me. It took a roundabout route, my first collisions with it were scattershot and strange in a decade saved by the Stooges and Dolls, Springsteen and the eternal Stones, the Pistols, Ramones, and Clash...but it found me.

I first caught that feeling of liberation off the radio from Spinners records. Phillippe Wynne's jubilant, scatting leads on "Mighty Love" and "Rubberband Man" and "Then Came You" (in dynamic tandem with Dionne Warwick) promised ecstasies that were just out of reach of my comprehension, but which hit my body dead-on. Elton John was my Jerry Lee and Little Richard, silly, fantastic, and fun; if you were 11 or 12 and stuck in the Bible Belt in his prime, nothing sounded as totally and wonderfully different from the details of your life than "Bennie and the Jets", "The Bitch is Back", "Rocket Man", "Goodbye Yellow Brick Road",

"Philadelphia Freedom", "Saturday Night's All Right for Fighting". Say what you want now, but then, he rocked, and revealed another world to a midwestern kid.

Then there was Alice Cooper, supreme boogie-man to the 70's equivalents of the PMRC, but — just like Marilyn — crass as they come. The theatrics were one thing, but the guitar behind "Eighteen", "School's Out", and "No More Mr. Nice Guy" pushed me in front of my bedroom mirror and had me strumming and screaming. I thank my mom and dad for not shutting me down, and I still know those lyrics by heart. I was rawking, posting my personal top 40 on my 6th grade classroom's bulletin board, taping shit off the radio and forcing it on kids who were still sleeping.

Next phase, another rock-life archetype: the chain reaction detonated by the accidental discovery. Coop and Elton were fading, Wynne had bolted the Spinners, and Air Supply and Kenny Rogers were making their MOR moves (the Christian Coalition and lil' George Shrub III remind me of them all the time). I was seeking refuge in Neal Adams' Green Lantern/Green Arrow comics on DC, and that series was drawing to a close after having gifted me with a teensy political consciousness and nurtured the gift of rebellion those first rock and roll icons had bestowed upon me. Shit was looking grim. One day, Mom gave me \$5 to buy some comics downtown while she shopped, and the world as I knew it would soon be capsized, yet rescued.

I wandered into the now long-gone corner newsstand and found nothing but shitty art and bad stories on the comic rack, and wheeled to leave in disgust. Something caught my eye: the newest *Rolling Stone* cover, displaying a 5 o'clock-shadowed, V-neck undershirt-wearin' greaser glowering at me. OK, so I had the seeds of rebellion growing inside of me, but I was still a son of the Methodist church, and I'd been told the mag was for dope-smokers, about which I didn't know diddly. Still. A defiance burned in the guy's eyes that aligned with something true I felt but couldn't pin down — so I bought it and had it sacked. What the hell.

Later, in the privacy of my room, I got to know not only Bruce (remember: this was southwest Missouri, and Springsteen almost never hit the radio there), but...Dylan. Greil fucking Marcus, reviewing "Street Legal" in that issue, had stomped a mud puddle in the grouchy old fart's ass, but the excerpted lyrics [from "Senor (Tales of Yankee Power)", as I recall] jazzed me, and Marcus' allusion to "Highway 61 Revisited" sent me down to Ken's Records with my lifeguard's pay, where I picked up those two records and "Darkness on the Edge of Town". From that moment, my life's course careened perfectly out of control, into the live (in the explosive sense) domain of possibility instead of the dead one of carefully circumscribed outcomes. Two years later, I was ruining dates and becoming a dis-magnet for my friends as I tried to show and explain this rich, earthy ambrosia I'd drilled down and found; spurning *Sports*

PHIL OVEREEM

Illustrated for Creem; quitting football and writing my ass off; getting kicked out of class and assemblies; and giving church the bum's rush (my sunday school teacher laid into the Pistols one morning during the American tour uproar, not suspecting that any of her brood knew shit; I exploded, got booted, and my parents gave up on making me go. The "church" was lying about life, just like most of 'em do now.

Trouble was, I was alone. Closest I could find to compadres were joint jockeys getting catatonic to everything from Rush to Zep to Judas Priest to Neil, and I just couldn't buy in (well, I made an exception with Young): energy is good, motherfuckers!!! Somebody had spray-painted "Ramones" on the sainted baseball park wall, but damned if I could locate the perpetrators. I was aching for world conquest, but I needed fellow riders.

You can't go through life alone. You'll either be a pompous, arrogant, selfish prick, or a pathetic, self-destructive loner. And in college — bad as it is — I found two other men who joined me on the shining path of rock and roll. I realized that I wasn't some misguided crackpot — other folks loved this stuff. One of 'em validated all my suspicions that rock and roll was American nectar, a way to keep moving when most of the other voices said, "Stand still, boy"; the other led me down through the catacombs of the underground, studded with jeweled doors labeled "Black Flag", "Replacements", "Minutemen", "Descendents", and "Husker Du", doors too few found until after death and dissent collapsed the rooms within (hell, they're on the verge of being forgotten now). And, in short order, the stacked cards of this midwestern life got shuffled: I've been working as a rocking and rolling teacher — in termite fashion — for the past 15 years, instead of as an accountant, statistician, or real-estate agent; rather than marrying a some future soccer-mom hag, I found a beautiful woman who had Sister Rosetta, Bad Religion, Coltrane, Hank Sr., and the Ramones singing in her soul all along, and I've never been happier; I hear my god in voices as disparate as Eric Bachmann's and Wayne Hancock's and Jimmy Scott's, and I don't need some sterile building in which to kneel to it; and I know the sound of salvation is sweet, sweet racket and piercing cries and hollers in the night.

Don't be misled. Don't be afraid. Listen for that tumult, catch ahold, and ride it. You can be saved, brothers and sisters.

This is my prayer of gratitude to the noise that knows no master. Lead on. ✚

DEVOTCHKAS

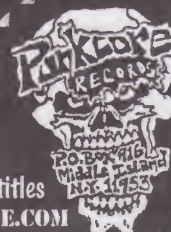
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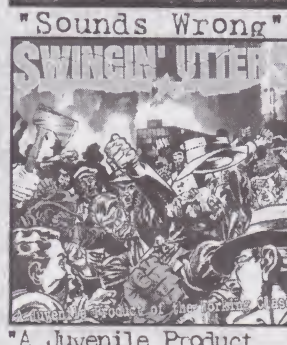


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THE ALMIGHTY TOP TENS

SHITLIST

Jeff Bale

CONTROLLERS - CD
 JONESES - "Criminal History" CD
 KIDNAP - "79-85" CD
 MAJOR ACCIDENT - "Representation Not Reality" 7"
 JOHNNY MOPED - "Best of..." CD
 PANDORAS - "Psychedelic Sluts" CD
 PEEPSHOWS - "Right About Now" CD EP
 TUULI - "Rockstar Potential" CD
 V/A - "Searching in the WILderness" LP/CD
 V/A - "Story of Oak Records" CD

Adam X

- 1) TSAR - CD (more than once!)
- 2) SOUR JAZZ - "No Values" CD
- 3) FIGGS - "Low-Fi at High Society" CD
- 4) DAMNED - "BBC Sessions" CD
- 5) COYOTE SHIVERS - CD
- 6) FLIPSIDES - EP/CD
- 7) GODFATHERS - "Texas Chainsaw Massacre" CD
- 8) PLASMATICS - "Beyond the Valley of 1984/Metal Priestess" CD
- 9) SUPERSUCKERS - "The Evil Powers of Rock & Roll" CD
- 10) GENERATION X - "Perfect Hits 1975-1981" CD

Dimitri Monroe

- 1) TRASH BRATS - "Rocket To Heaven" 7" (+ new LP tracks)
- 2) V/A - "Drunk On Rock, Part 2" CD
- 3) AMERICAN HEARTBREAK - "Postcards From Hell" CD
- 4) VEINS - "Glorious Sounds of..." CD
- 5) JOE STRUMMER & MESCALEROS - "Rock Art & the X-Ray Style" CD
- 6) PAUL K - "Blue For Charlie Lucky" CD
- 7) HUTCHINSONS - "Plastic Fruit & Popcorn" CD
- 8) SLOW MOTORCADE - "Pop On A Grand Scale" CD
- 9) EXCESSORIES - demos
- 10) LEAVING TRAINS - "Smoke Follows Beauty" CD

Alan Wright

MYSTERY ACTION - "Here's To Another Year" CD
 MISSING LINKS - "Driving You Insane" CD
 TELEVISION - "New York Stories" CD
 STREETWALKIN' CHEETAHS - "Bootlegging The Bootlickers" CD
 TESTORS - "New York City Punk Rock 1979" LP
 APEMEN - "Phantacity" LP
 V/A - "Aliens, Psychos & Wild Things" CD
 LOS REACTORS - "Dead In The Suburbs" LP
 ROLLING STONES tons of 60s/early 70s live/outtakes boots.
 DAVID BOWIE lots of 60s/early 70s live/outtakes boots

Jami Wolf

- 1) TEMPLARS - "Biaus Seignors Freres" CD
- 2) GUILTY PLEASURES - "Trash Bag" 7"
- 3) WEIRDOS - "Ranting in a Rubber Room" 7"
- 4) WRETCHED ONES - everything
- 5) REDUCERS SF - live at Bottom of the Hill
- 6) SOLDIER 76 - "Balance Of Armour" CD
- 7) LIMECELL - "Destroy The Underground" CD
- 8) ANTISEEN - "15 Years" CD
- 9) RITCHIE WHITES - live at CW Saloon
- 10) SKUDZ - "Hate Your Trend" LP

Tina Lucchesi

- 1) DICTATORS - live at the Las Vegas Shakedown
- 2) CHANTS R&B - "Live '66, The Stage Door Tapes" LP/CD
- 3) DOGS - "Charlie Was a Good Boy" 7"
- 4) FUN THINGS - 7" EP
- 5) PINKZ - 7"
- 6) V/A - "My Girlfriend Was a Punk" LP
- 7) RIFF RANDALLS - 7" EP
- 8) NERVOUS EATERS - "Loretta" 7"
- 9) GIZMOS - 7" & CD
- 10) DAXLS - everything

Jeremy

Napster
 Preacher - comic book
 THE STEREO - "New Tokyo" CD EP

REGGIE & THE FULL EFFECT - "Promotional Copy" CD
 V/A - "Killed By Crackle" CD
 YOUNG HASSELHOFFS - "Get Dumped" CD
 BEATNIK TERMITES - "Pleasant Dreams" LP
 TILTWHEEL - "Hair Brained Scheme Addicts" CD
 ME FIRST & THE GIMME GIMMES - "Live At The Folsom Street Fair"
 AMERICAN STEEL - live at the Lookout Freakout

Dave Johnson

JAWBREAKER - "24 Hour Revenge Therapy" CD
 JETS TO BRAZIL - "Four Corned Night" CD/Live in SF and Portland
 DIO - "Holy Diver"
 PINHEAD GUNPOWDER - "Goodbye Ellston Ave"
 AMERICAN STEEL - live at the Lookout Freakout
 DILLINGER FOUR - "Versus God" CD/live
 AVAIL - "One Wrench" CD/live
 LEATHERFACE - live w/Avail & D4 and at the Tempest in SF
 SAMIAM - Live at EJ's in Portland
 DIVIT - Live at the Meow Meow in Portland

Brett Mathews

NERVE AGENTS - "Days of the White Owl" CD
 HOPELIFTER - "North of the Thirty-Six" CD
 MANGES - "Mandy" 7"
 HOT WATER MUSIC (as always)
 SAN GERONIMO
 REDEMPTION 87
 V/A - "Disarming Violence" CD
 The fact that there will be a new PROPAGANDHI album in January.
 Re-realizing that AVAIL is the greatest band ever.
 Knowing that the future of the world belongs to BREATHE IN and OPPENHEIMER.

Your fearless leaders through the vast and daunting catacombs of rock 'n' roll recordings. Just so you know who to blame when you plunk down your hard earned cash on a slab of plastic, run home as fast as your little punk legs will carry you and spin it anxiously, only to find it completely, totally and indisputably sucks: Athena Dread (AD), Tina Lucchesi (TL), Jeremy Cool (JER), Brett Mathews (BAM), Jimi Cheetah (JC), Sara Bellum (SB), Jeff Bale (JB), Dimitri Monroe (DJM) Jami Wolf (JAW), and Ramsey Kanaan (RK), Mark Devito (MD), Adam X (X).

SHITLIST



A.F.I. "The Art Of Drowning" CD

"Black Sails In The Sunset" was the melodic HC album of the year last year, but such a great record is hard to follow up on.

This one has more complicated songs that don't grow on you as fast, but after a few listens they carry the same punch. The songs you don't get into right away usually turn out to be your faves, anyway. A.F.I. once again prove that they are one of the best bands going, and you'll probably have to pry that title out of their cold, dead hands. (BAM) (Nitro/nitrorecords.com)

ANGELIC UPSTARTS

"The BBC Punk Sessions" CD

I loved the early UPSTARTS, but these BBC recordings are rather a mixed bag. The band's delivery is especially lackluster during the 1978 session, where even an early version of "Upstart" ñ one of their soon-to-be classics ñ doesn't pack much of a wallop. Although the later sessions have a heavier sound, only "Kids on the Street", "Two Million Voices", and the horribly cruel "Stick's Diary" have sufficient intensity, and the ghastly addition of horns at the 1981 session only worsens the situation. (JB)

(Captain Oi/PO Box 501/High Wycombe, Bucks HP10 8QA/ENGLAND)

ANTI/DOGMATIKSS

"Ets Una Peca Mes" CD

Finally! A collection from the 80s Barcelona political hardcore legends. Martin from LOS CRUDOS put out a 7" of some of their material, which is probably how you'll have come across them before. They were an incredible, raging, fast, shambolic hardcore band. This "greatest hits" includes both their demos - they never actually released a record of their own - and sundry compilation tracks - all housed in an incredibly lavish package: hardcover, and a huge bi-lingual booklet packed with photos, lyrics, reminisces and anecdotes. (RK)

(Tralla Records/www.trallarecords.com)



ANTI-HEROS "1000 Nights Of Chaos" CD

An excellent live LP. Great sound, great production, and a great performance of all your skinhead faves.

Fortunately, the ANTI-HEROS have always eschewed apeing any particular style, and have pretty much carved out their own brand of speedy pogo-punk. CLASH and OPPRESSED covers fill out a rather tasty set. If you're getting overdosed on all the rubbish that masquerades as "street-punk" these days, this is a fine reminder of how good punk can still sound. (RK)

(Taang/706 Pismo Court/San Diego, CA 92109)

ANTISEEN

"15 Minutes Of Fame, 15 Years Of Infamy" CD

What we have here is the Steel Cage's US release of the "15 Minutes" CD. Along with the "Blood Of Freaks" EP (which alone makes this worth purchasing), it includes a bunch of unreleased live shit and B-sides, making it an ideal way to round out the ol' ANTISEEN collection. Which means that you really need this record. (JAW)

(Steel Cage/PO Box 29247/Philadelphia, PA 19125)

ANTISEEN

"Sabu" 7"

The newest ANTISEEN single is an absolute ripper, and the title track pays a fitting tribute to the infamous wrestler. Also included is a live version of "Sick Things". ANTISEEN fans won't be able to do without this rocker. (JAW) (Steel Cage/PO Box 29247/Philadelphia, PA 19125)



APERS

"Faster, It's Alright" 7" EP

10 songs crammed onto this EP. Apparently they're some pop band from The Netherlands and this is some old demo stuff that was all

"garage" and shit. I gotta tell you, this kinda sucks, and from the looks of these guys, they must've shelled out a pretty penny for the blow jobs they're getting on the cover. (JER) (Stardumb/PO Box 21145/3001 AC Rotterdam/HOLLAND)

AS FRIENDS RUST

"An Anthology Of Short Fiction And Non-Fiction" CD

This is pretty throaty emo-ish punk-rock. It's totally convincing in the personal rage category,

and the music is more than competent. Although the lyrics tend to be a little heavy, dealing with betrayal, unrequited love and the like - typical stuff that we all have to muddle through in one way or another - this band handles the unpleasanties in a very eloquent manner. (SB)

(Doghouse/116 NW 13th Street #154/Gainesville, FL 32601)



AUTOMATIC 7 "Beggars Life" CD

I was real excited to see this CD. The last record I came across from these SoCal dudes must've been a good six years ago. Unsurprisingly, their sound has

"matured" from that of FACE TO FACE to a more grizzled, later SOCIAL DISTORTION. The singer maintains that great throaty catch in his voice, and this definitely rocks, in a world-weary, well-travelled way. (RK)

(Vagrant/2118 Wilshire Blvd #361/Santa Monica, CA 90403)

AVENGERS

CD

The AVENGERS' only official album, itself a posthumous 1983 release, has yet to be reissued legally. Although an address is listed on this, it may very well be fake. I believe this is a bootleg, but the sound is great and you get a slew of live bonus tracks taken from the infamous "Two Black Eyes" bootleg LP. Great classics like "We Are The One", "I Believe In Me", "The American In Me", and "Thin White Line." Until a legit release comes out, this will most certainly do. (AW)

(Lady Butcher/1101 Shoreway Road/San Francisco, CA 94133)

ASSAILANTS

"Modern Technology" CD

This is old-style hardcore. I guess if I was heavily into hardcore, this might get the ol' panties wet, but hardcore unfortunately doesn't get my chones in a bunch. This is exactly what you would expect hardcore to sound like from, say, 86 to 88, though it's not as metal-y. (JAW)

(Upstart/65A W. Madison Avenue #254/Dumont, NJ 07628)



BANTAM ROOSTER "Big Mess" 7" EP

A 3-song EP covering DEVO's "Big Mess," the SAINTS' "Private Affair," and "Dirt Preacher" by the GIBSON BROTHERS. Their version of

"Private Affair" is pretty good, considering that it's such an awesome original. This band kinda reminds me of CLAWHAMMER for some reason. (TL)

(Flying Bomb/PO Box 971038/Ypsilanti, MI 48197)

BEATNIK TERMITES

"Pleasant Dreams" LP

The latest (and hopefully last) in the infamous RAMONES cover series from Clearview Records (this one's actually a split release with Coldfront). The TERMITES stay pretty true to the originals, the exception being that Pat's got a way better voice than Joey ever had (sorry, I'm as big a RAMONES fan as the next guy, probably bigger - I even own "Acid Eaters" - but it's true.) Anyway, if you're like me, you collect this series regardless of whether or not they suck. (JER)

(Coldfront/PO Box 8345/Berkeley, CA 94707)



BELA

"Til Summer Ends" CD

This band is way moody, and much too arty for my liking. This is something you would hear when you walk into a room full of

weirdos and seed farmers. Sheesh, there's even a fuckin' celloist in the band. How un-rock'n' roll is that, and why did they send it to *Hit List*? (TL)

(Mother West/132 West 26th/New York, NY 10001)

BETTER READ THAN DEAD

"A Better Land" CD

Ah, the return of retard rock. These shiny bright young white warriors obviously haven't heard that Communism went out when the wall came down. Nevertheless, they've been religiously listening to their "Hail The New Dawn" SKREWDRIVER record on repeat, and they come up with a similarly turgid brand of "white rock". Not punk or Oi or even street-punk, just boring, badly-played, slow rock. If this is the best the Aryan race can offer, you guys are fucked. (RK)

(Rock Against Communism, ha fucking ha)



little girlie sound - will probably go ga-ga over

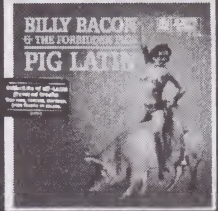
BIG HELLO

"Orange Album" CD

It's not my cup of tea, but those of you who are into ELASTICA, VERUCA SALT, or HEAVENLY - that sort of wannabe tough while totally playing up the

it. I mean, if we're talking fisticuffs, ELASTICA could totally kick BIG HELLO's ass. I'm just not sure that the world needs another band that's this darned CUTE. (SB)

(Break-Up/PO Box 15372/Columbus, OH 43215)



BILLY BACON & THE FORBIDDEN PIGS

"Pig Latin" CD

These guys have made a career out of some inside joke, and I suppose we can laugh along too - if there's enough booze around.

Their sixth LP is a collection of witty tunes that all have a drunken siesta, Tex-Mex flavor to them, though I wish the vocals sounded a little more gritty. An indie/punk Mariachi band. (SB)

(Triple X, who for some reason, think they're too important to print their address)



BITCH SCHOOL

"Bitchschool" EP

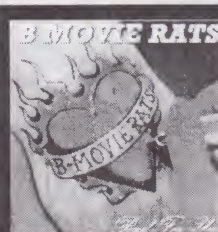
This looks like a trademark Rip Off release, with a bad Xeroxed cover and a Castro Valley address. But it's pretty good snotty rock'n'roll with

female vocals, similar to LOLI & THE CHONES. If you're into Rip Off sound with a girlpunk flavor, definitely check this out. (JER)
(Lipstick/5088 Camino Alta Mira/Castro Valley, CA 94546)

BLACKS

"Hate You Like Gold" LP

A fantastic slab of Arizona hot wax. Something about the desert must have made these guys go a little goofy. The BLACKS generate a dirty wall of punchy mayhem, and are fronted by a throaty maniacal lead singer. This is sort of a hardcore-meets-garage sound, like JESUS LIZARD fucking AUS ROTTEN. (JC)
(Chemical Valley/PO Box 77142/Tucson, AZ 85703)



B MOVIE RATS

"Bad For You" CD

Seems like everyone's taking the low road to rock. Down and dirty gets it done, I guess. Just ask the GAZA STRIPPERS or STREETWALKIN

CHEETAHS. I know I'm getting old because this new breed of rock all sounds the same even if

REVIEWS

it does rock. I'd like to think we have the DEVIL DOGS to thank for this and the HUMBERS to blame. B MOVIE RATS are right in the trenches with the rest of 'em, but in the survival of the fittest man has been known to live off the rats. (X)

(Junk/7071 Warner Avenue F PMB 736/Huntington Beach, CA 92647)



BOBBY EBOLA & THE CHILDREN MACNUGGITS

"Carmelita Sings! Visions Of A Rock Apocalypse" CD

You have to give 'em points for having a clever moniker. The

music consists of wacky, zany comedic ditties for members of the displaced intelligentsia who were too smart, bored, or stoned to finish college. They could, should, and probably will make a record with WEIRD AL YANKOVIC. Happily enough they printed the lyrics, so you can yuck along with the music. (SB)
(Teal Shirt Music, no address listed)

BOBBYTEENS

"Not So Sweet" CD

We all know the BOBBYTEENS rule, but this CD is exceptional. Amazing buzzsaw guitar tones with great female vocals rockin' the sugar pop end of the R&R spectrum. A must have for fans of the RUNAWAYS, NIKKI & THE CORVETTES, or the more widely acknowledged DONNAS. One listen and you'll be singing backing vocals for Tina and playing air drums with Russell. By the way, "Do You Want Me" is your new favorite song. (BAM)
(Estrus/PO Box 2125/Bellingham, WA 98227)

BOLLOCKS

"Here's A Gift For You" LP

The BOLLOCKS, hailing from Japan, play EXPLOITED-influenced, supercharged "I don't give a fuck" hardcore punk. What you see is pretty much what you get, so if you are into early 80's-ish punk you'd probably like this. The BOLLOCKS sing in Japanese, but it's kinda cool that they also have the lyrics printed in English. So there's no doubt what messages are being espoused. (JAW)

Knock Out Records/
Postfach 100716/46527
Dinslaken/ Germany)

books lie

it a weapon

BOOKS LIE

"It's A Weapon" CD

From the looks of this, I was expecting a real

SHITLIST

heartbreaking indie rock sojourn into the soul of a tortured teen. The titles of the songs were unusually clever, so I ventured to read the lyrics, which were pretty deep and certainly atypical. Unfortunately, the music was garden variety scream-core, a la every punk/metal band going these days instead of something as unique as the lyrics. (SB)
(Satellite Transmissions/PO Box 4432/Boulder, CO 80306)



BRASS TACKS "The Good Life" 7" EP

This EP is chock full o' some pretty tough streetpunk tunes, complete with vaguely humorous lyrics and some references to SLADE and AC/DC

(which is A-OK by me). This is catchy enough and definitely worth a listen, but it's not up to Headache's awesome standards. (JAW)
(Headache/PO Box 204/Midland Park, NJ 07432)



BRUISERS "Better Days" CD

Another retrospective CD with various BRUISERS shims and shams. The BRUISERS are (were) an ultra tough East Coast streetpunk group which

also drew heavily from country influences. This CD includes all their hits, including "All Messed Up" and "Forty Miles Of Bad Road". Singer Al Barr later left this awesome band to play with the likes of the DROPKICK MURPHYS. Too bad for the BRUISERS, and everyone else. (JAW)

BRISTOLS "Introducing..." LP/CD

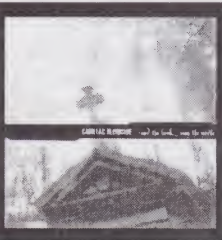
The BRISTOLS are a UK-based neo-60's garage band featuring Fabienne from the DIRTY BURDS on vocals and bass, so I had high hopes for this. Unfortunately, this LP contains only covers (including famous songs by the DAVE CLARK FIVE and BRUCE CHANNEL), something which can only be justified if some of the covers are as good as or better than the original versions. In this case they generally aren't, although "Touch" and "He'll Never Come Back" have some primitive exuberance. (JB)
(Damaged Goods/PO Box 671/London E17 6NF/ENGLANDng/706 Pismo Court/San Diego, CA 92109)



BUMPIN' UGLIES "Finer Things in Life" CD

Loud, fast, and uncatchy "dude" punk rock, featuring songs about being manly and drinking brewskis. They have a song called "Fat,

Loud, and Drunk." That says it all. Not for wimps or femmy boys. (TL)
(Transparent/6759 Transparent Drive/Clarkston, MI 48346)



CADILLAC BLINDSIDE "Read The Book Seen The Movie" CD

Pop-punk, I guess, sort of. Mebbe indie rock, kind of, perhaps. They definitely come from that emo, college end of things. At their better

(more upbeat) moments they remind me a bit of KNAPSACK, or mebbe even JAWBREAKER. And they do it pretty well. (RK)
(Soda Jerk/PO Box 4056/Boulder, CO 80306)



CARAVELLES "Lovin' Just My Style/Self Service" 7"

The CARAVELLES were a local STONES-inspired band in mid-60's Phoenix, and this 45 does a nice job capturing their punchy

sound. "Lovin'" is a prime example of fuzz-drenched garage punk with rave-up breaks and pouty vocals, and is here represented in two versions, one of them instrumental. The flipside is a moodier lament with an organ lead that's also pretty good, and the sound quality of this reissue is excellent. (JB)
(Dionysus/PO Box 1975/Burbank, CA 91507)

CANDYASS "Love Dizzy" CD

This is East Bay Ray's (ex-DEAD KENNEDYS) new band. Although the guitar stylings are impressive at times, which isn't at all surprising, the lead vocalist usually sounds so bombastic that the annoyance factor outweighs the band's good points for me. This is all the more true since, with a few exceptions, the songs have a quirky quality that I always find irritating. (JB)
(Pitchfork/1376 South Van Ness Avenue/San Francisco, CA 94110)

CERTAIN GENERAL "November's Heat" CD

Ugh! This is best described as semi-

experimental post-punk music with the occasional 60's influence. Sometimes it works, as on "Maximum G", though most of the time it falls flat on its face. I find it to be way too pretentious and not nearly rockin' enough, but those who enjoy artier bands like the PSYCHEDELIC FURS and the BIRTHDAY PARTY might just like it. (JB)
(Alive/PO Box 7112/Burbank, CA 91510)



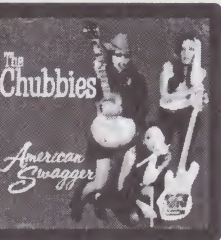
CHIXDIGGIT! "From Scene To Shining Scene" CD

A brand new full-length, although the total time on the 11 tracks must be under 30 minutes. But every one is a pop-punk gem. Of all the

RAMONES-inspired bands, they best reproduce the ballad end of the original foursome. "The KKK Took My Baby Away" never sounded so fresh, shiny, or modern. Yet another release with one of them new-fangled bonus CD Rom things. (RK)
(Honest Don's/PO Box 192027/San Francisco, CA 94119-2027)

CHRIS SPEDDING "Hurt" CD

CHRIS SPEDDING has long been a fab behind-the-scenes guitar gunslinger, so it's great to see a reissue of what is arguably his best solo LP. Not only do you get numerous stylish r'n'r songs filled with hep vocals and shimmering, tasteful licks, including slightly countrified numbers like "Lone Rider" and punkier blasts like "Stay Dumb", "Hurt By Love", and "Get Outa My Pagoda", but on the CD Repertoire also had the good sense to add bonus cuts such as his fun 1976 single with the VIBRATORS, "Pogo Dancing/The Pose". I'm definitely kicking up my heels. (JB)
(Repertoire, no address listed)



CHUBBIES "American Swagger" CD demos

Her name is Jeannette Louise Kantzalis and these are her 8-track demos. It's all very self-indulgent, and who knows why she chose

such a bad band name to represent herself as a serious songwriter, but I'm pleased to see she could care less. It's just too bad she doesn't have a real band with a real name, although her songs are good in the DIVINYLS sense of the word. Touch yourself. (X)
(Sympathy/)



COACH

"Package Deal" CD EP
Jangly indie guitar rock with a downright endearing and perhaps even uplifting sound. I'm not sure what makes this better than your average college

type band, but these guys just seem a little more genuine, like they're moulting or shedding their skin when they play their songs. Sweet stuff, with melodies that could make you sing all alone in the car, or anywhere. (SB)

(Doghouse/PO Box 8946/Toledo, OH 43623)



COME ON'S

"Whatcha Got" CD

A well-dressed 60's hipster band complete with organ and harmonica. Some people go nuts for this stuff, but it bores the pants off me. (JER) (Sympathy)



THE CONTROLLERS

"Neutron Bomb" CD

The CONTROLLERS were one of my very favorite bands, and Dionysus has had the good sense to reissue an entire CD's worth of material by these

original LA punks. It not only includes both of the CONTROLLERS own 7's, but also their tracks on compilations and select songs by certain other bands featuring key members Johnny Stingray and Kidd Spike, most notably KAOS and SKULL CONTROL. If you don't drop your jaw when you hear Kidd Spike's slashing guitar licks and laugh out loud when you hear the "offensive" lyrics on classics like "Killer Queens", "Slow Boy", and "Hot Stumps", don't dare call yourself a punk. (JB) (Dionysus/PO Box 1975/Burbank, CA 91507)

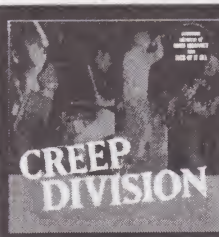


COYOTE SHIVERS

The first and last time I saw COYOTE was in '96 at CBGB's. All the chicks dug him, so I thought I'd give it a go. Let me tell you, it was great and so is this CD.

COYOTE's secret rock ingredient is mood, something that you just don't get from today's rockers. In COYOTE I hear all my favorites; IGGY, STIV, CARROLL, HELL, and even little WENDY O. What else do you need? (X)

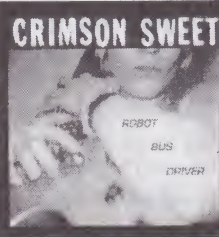
(MP3.COM/4790 Eastgate Mall/San Diego, CA 92121)



CREEP DIVISION

"Failure" CD
Boredom creates funny shit sometimes. GOOD RIDDANCE's Russ Rankin (vox) on bass and Chuck (bass) on guitar, along with SICK OF IT ALL's Craig Ahead

(bass) on vox. While not quite as heavy or "metal" as they were live, this band is still all out DAG NASTY vs. AGNOSTIC FRONT HC. These guys are obviously quite talented, which should put your mind at ease. (BAM) (Indecision/PO Box 5781/Huntington Beach, CA 92615)



CRIMSON SWEET

"Robot Bus Driver" 7" EP
CRIMSON STREET are a New York band with an alternately abrasive and purty-sounding female lead vocalist and a bass player who

ñ if the pic on the sleeve is any indication ñ bears a resemblance to Mick Jagger. It's mainly noisy stuff with a quirky New/No Wave vibe that sometimes satisfies (especially on the title track) and sometimes only annoys (as with "CTR"). (JB) (Crimson Sweet/PO Box 20506, Tompkins Square Station/New York, NY 10009)

CROSSTOPS

"Cloverleaf Fandango" CD

Hard-working local boys that play punkified country with charm and panache. Solid to frenzied playing makes this a good soundtrack for your next drag race or monster truck rally. That's a compliment. (JC) (Revenge/PO Box 410701/San Francisco, CA 94141)

COLUMBIAN NECKTIES

demo

Jumpin' Jesus on a pogo stick! Despite the no-overdubs, rehearsal-space sound, this demo, as the band moniker implies, rips. Having one remnant of SHAKE APPEAL in their ranks, these Danes deliver rock'n'roll the way it should be: no holds barred, pissed off, and kicking substantial amounts of anus, proving again that Euro-rock is where it's at, baby. The highlights are "Too Naked to Care", "Whiskey Jive", and "The Bitch is Bad". (TS) (no label listed)

COUNT DANTE & THE BLACK DRAGON FIGHTING SOCIETY

"The Deadliest Man Alive" CD

COUNT DANTE is an "incredibly strange wrestler" who also fronts a Bay Area garage hard rock/punk band. He's a clever lyricist who writes lots of obnoxious funnypunk lyrics and peppers his musical offerings with within-song and between-song motivational banter, a trait I always appreciate when it's done properly. With potential future "Killed By Death" selections like "Speed Queen", "I Don't Care if You're Married", "Beware of the Wonder Bra", and their hilarious theme song, "Redwood City Rock City", it's hard to go wrong here, although the COUNT is perhaps best appreciated live and in the flesh. (JB) (no label listed; HYPERLINK mailto:countdante@hotmail.com / countdante@hotmail.com)

DAMNED

"[BBC] Sessions of the..." CD

A collection of "live in the studio" BBC recordings by one of the most powerful of first generation British punk groups. The DAMNED were always a terrifically over-the-top live act, and despite the absence of a chaotic audience they're mighty impressive here. The 1976 session is especially explosive, and manic drummer Rat Scabies ñ the Keith Moon of the punk generation ñ even manages to give an adrenalin rush to their later, more tuneful material. "So Messed Up" still astounds. (JB) (Fuel 2000/c/o 10 Universal City Plaza/Universal City, CA 91608)

DAS BOOT/SWEET J.A.P.

split 7" EP

Two Japanese bands, one from Tokyo, and one from Minneapolis? (That's what it says.) Both play fast and loud guitar-crunchy punk rock. Good tunes to do "ring around the rosie" to. To me it doesn't seem very hooky or catchy, but "that's my life," as Neil Hamburger would say. (TL) (Nice And Neat/PO Box 14177/Minneapolis, MN 55414)



DAVENPORTS

"Speaking of..." CD

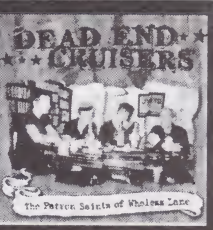
Godawful, wanna-be-on-MTV alternative crap. I always get stuck with this shit. (JER) (Mother West/132 W 26th Street/New York, NY 10001)

SHITLIST

DAYLIGHT LOVERS

"One Man Gang" 7" EP

This record, their third, totally blisters the eardrums. Ultra lo-fi garage punk is again offered up by this scrungy Montreal outfit. The title song and "Riding on the 262" are crude, loud, incredibly primitive, and ñ most importantly ñ hella rockin', whereas "Get Back to Christmas" is no less distorted but not as fast or driving. A bit more tuneage couldn't hurt, though. (JB)
(High School Release/Bertageweg 12/9731 LN Groningen/HOLLAND)



DEAD END CRUISERS

"The Patron Saints of Wheless Lane" CD

I know why this band calls themselves the Dead End Cruisers, 'cause they're going absolutely nowhere. CLASH-inspired punk

rock, pub rockish at times. The singer is English, but the rest of the band are from Texas, where they don't have real soccer. (TL)
(Unity Squad/354 West 100N/Logan, UT 84321)

DEAD MAN'S CHOIR

"She Don't Like It/First Time" 7"

This is the sound that's fashionable for that "lucky 13", tattooed biker crowd. The band cranks out sloppy-cool, raunchy ex-punk blasters that are better than your average drunken bar band. I mean that in a good way. (SB)
(Know/PO Box 90579/Long Beach, CA 90809)



DEATH OF MARAT

"The Shattered" CD

When you name your band DEATH OF MARAT, it's possible that you just might be taking yourselves a bit too seriously. The title of this epic, "The

Shattered", furthered my suspicions, and upon further listening I discovered a maelstrom of clattering guitars that might one day try to play jazz, frantic uncontrollable drumming, and overly dramatic vocals. All the earmarks of middle- to upper-class, reasonably intelligent young guys overthinking life in general are present. (SB)

(Satellite Transmissions/PO Box 4432/Boulder, CO 80306)



DED BUGS

"Songs for the Possessed and Insane" CD

The title sounds like a SUICIDAL record, and the band members look like MOTORHEAD, but I'll be goddamned if

these guys don't kick some ass. They have the standard SCREECHING WEASEL pop-punk thing going on, but they balance it out with something that sounds like the DICKIES crossed with the "Rocky Horror Picture Show" (by the way, the most depressing thing about the Warped tour this year was watching 5,000 kids fight each other to get a glimpse of NOFX, while the DICKIES played in front of 100 old fuckers on the side stage.) This was a welcome surprise. (JER)

(318 Stewart/DeSoto, MO 63020)



DEMENTED ARE GO

"In Sickness and in Health" LP

DEMENTED ARE GO are pretty much one of the bands that invented the psychobilly genre. I don't really know their history, album to album

(get off my case - we're working on getting a rockabilly/psychobilly expert!), but this particular record is quite awesome. Special care has been taken to release it as a beautiful vinyl record, so support the cause, ya puke! (JC)

(Knock Out/Postfach 100716/46527 Dinslaken/GERMANY)



DIALTONES

"Come On Everybody" LP

Another healthy dose of that rock'n'roll serum that we here at *Hit List* love so much. A powerful 3-piece that plays like a 5-piece.

Cool packaging, solid songs. (JC)
(Screaming Apple/

DIALTONES

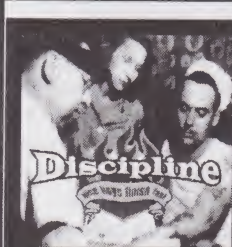
"Shortsharpshock" LP

A one-sided 8-song LP of NEW BOMB TURKS guitar riffs with RAMONES tendencies. Not bad, but not great either. (JER)
(Radio Blast/PO Box 160308/40566 Dusseldorf/GERMANY)

DISCIPLINE

"Nice Boys Finish Last" CD

A modern, Dutch (singing in English, of



course) tough guy/skinhead band. They actually do a fairly bang-up job of copying the berst of the current NYC HC stuff (AGNOSTIC FRONT et al) and the early 80s British Oi stuff

(4-SKINS, BUSINESS, etc.). Nothing original or groundbreaking, but worth checking out if you dig this new breed of bald foolishness. (RK)
(Too Damn Hype/PO Box 15793/Philadelphia, PA 19103)

DISMEMBER

"Hate Campaign" CD

The first song sounds like it was made by metal heshers who gargle with battery acid daily and play guitars shaped like the letter 'W'. I can't even review the rest, 'cause my girlfriend keeps yelling "Turn that shit off!". So color me pussywhipped already. (TS)

DOG TOFFEE

"The Future Of Rock And Roll Is In Your Hands" CD

These guys spend so much time trying to convince you of just how amazingly rock and roll they are, that it tends to get in the way of an actually pretty cool record. That, and the fact that DOG TOFFEE is just about the stupidist name I have heard since KAJAGOOGOO. A word to the wise: drop the postering, change the name, and just work on the tunes. A band with plenty of potential. (JC)
(Twenty Stone Blatt/PO Box 14911/Grangemouth FK3 8WA/ENGLAND)



DORY TOURETTE & THE SKIRTHEADS

"Rock Immortal" CD

This is fairly insane joke-rock a la WEEN, only nowhere near as clever or as well-executed. There's a myriad of musical styles

here, but the "zany" approach of this band sort of takes center stage. Most likely they're a lot of fun live, and the psycho-sexual, sicko songs are pretty funny at times. (SB)
(Spam/PO Box 21588/El Sobrante, CA 94820)



DROPKICK

MURPHYS/BUSINESS "Mob Mentality" CD

Two bands go into the studio, cover each others songs (and a few others - FACES, WHO, OUTLETS), and all join together for a couple

more, giving you, dear listener, 12 tracks in total. All I can add is that the DROPKICKS sound really good, and the BUSINESS sound tired, uninspired, and well past their sell-by date. Time to let the new breed take over, methinks. (RK)

(Taang/706 Pismo Court/San Diego, CA 92109)



DUANE PETERS & THE HUNS

"Not Gonna Pay" 7" EP

The title track is a really powerful song with a killer, super-catchy beat that's much better than I

originally expected, whereas "Passin' Out," is a kind of a "sad, emotional" number, complete with stormy sound effects. "Wake Up People" is definitely the most reminiscent of the U.S. BOMBS (How could it not be?!?). Pretty goddamn good for the HUNS' first release. (JAW)

(Hostage/PO Box 7736/Huntington Beach, CA 92615)



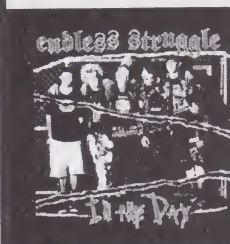
DUMBELL

"Don't Mess With Cupid" CD

This is the typical hard, fast indie rock that Cargo is so fond of providing us with. Apparently these guys are German, and it's

certainly got an edge to it. You can tell they are all current or ex-punks, and there's enough raw energy here to give PG&E a run for their money. (SB)

(Radio Blast/PO Box 160308/40566 Dusseldorf/GERMANY)



ENDLESS STRUGGLE

"In The Day" CD

This is a perfect cross between the CASUALTIES and BLANKS 77. Great high energy streetpunk anthems, complete with painted leathers

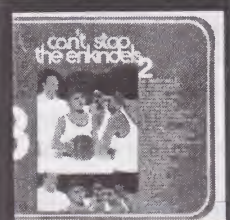
and sporting pyramids or mohawks. This music usually loses my interest after 3 or 4 songs, but this bad boy kept me rockin' for all 14 tracks. This is as good as it gets for modern day pogo punk. (BAM)

(Charged/PO Box 157/High Ridge, NJ 08829)

ENKINDELS

"Can't Stop The Enkindels" CD

More's the pity, I fear. I've no idea why this kind of well-played/produced pap gets



reviewed in this magazine, since it's about as far away from raw, stripped-down rock'n'roll as one could get. I guess one might call this commercial alternative rock.

Y'know, the stuff that

gets played (they wish) on commercial stations that play SMASHING PUMPKINS, THIRD EYE BLIND, THREE DOORS DOWN, that kind of shit. Apparently they sound sort of like the EELS, just a little more boring. (RK)

(Initial/PO Box 17131/Louisville, KY 40217)



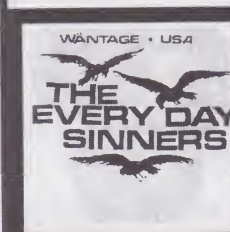
EULCID

"The Wind Blew All The Fires Out" CD

One of the new brand of "emo" outfits - quirky, discordant, multiple riff-changes. Definitely a bunch of guys with their backpacks in a

twist. I'm not quite sure what the difference is between emo and tortured progressive rock these days. This certainly is alot more akin to a deranged MARILLION than it is to RITES OF SPRING. Definitely not something you sing along to in the shower. (RK)

(Second Nature/PO Box 11543/Kansas City, MO 64138)



EVERYDAY SINNERS

"Wartage USA" 7" EP

Snotty and adventurous rock and rollers from Montana. "Treat Me Wrong" totally rocked my world, as it sounded way old school. (JC)

(Corn-Daddy, no

address listed)



F.B.I.

"Widerstand Zwecklos" CD

Insanely weird keyboard-laden German rock. The vocals are sung (spat out) with such gravity, but the keyboards are just so

freaky. Track 4 is pretty brilliant, with its slow, dramatic piano parts and its ultra-serious fast parts, whereas track 5 is absolutely out of control, with its synthed-out reggae beats. This CD is amazing because it is just so atrociously bad that it cracks me up. (JAW)

(Knockout/Postfach 100716/46527 Dinslaken/GERMANY)

REVIEWS



FEAR

"American Beer" CD

Well, color me pleasantly surprised, because this is the best FEAR record since "More Beer". Raging songs about beer, women, fighting,

God...and did I mention beer? Lee Ving's voice is in great form, and the songs are top-notch and totally catchy. Ving must be past 50 at this point, but like a rugged and well-worn blues singer, he might just be hitting his musical prime (although the first FEAR record will probably be hard to ever top). Absolutely recommendable. (JC)

(Hall Of Records/PO Box 69281/West Hollywood, CA 90069)



FEED THE MACHINE

"Feed The Machine" CD

Noisy, noisy boys. Are they pissed? I reckon they are, given the howling, gut-busting vocals that I can't understand, but I still get the point. The music

is straight-up rage rock, rooted in metal, digging some punk, and hating everything in sight. Fuckin' furious. (SB)

(Beer City/PO Box 26035/Milwaukee, WI 53226)



FEVERS

"Show" 7" EP

Much like the fabulous Pelado Records from down SoCal way, or the early Rip Off label, Lipstick has a simple but highly effective plan of attack: great lo-fi,

trashy rock and roll bands, killer tunes, and simple (yet exciting) packaging. The FEVERS have more than a hint of STIV BATORS channeled into their mix. Their B-side track, "Rebel Kind", should be a juke box hit in any self-respecting punk rock bar. (JC)

(Lipstick/1154 Powell Street/Oakland, CA 94608)



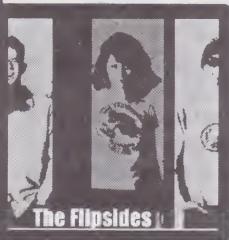
FIFTEEN

"Hush" CD EP

It's great that FIFTEEN give a portion of their proceeds to inestimably worthy causes. It's rather unfortunate that the music tends to be

SHIT LIST

shitty, and that the singer/songwriter/guitarist is barking mad. Actually, the first track is, astoundingly, not bad, lyrically, or musically. The other offerings descend into inane drivel. (RK)
(Sub City/PO Box 7495/Van Nuys, CA 91409)



FLIPSIDES CD

Out of the mouths of babes...this 5-song CD is all about the rock. Inspired by bands like THE MUDDS and GREEN DAY, this rock'n'roll love affair is young, fresh,

and honest. The babe in question here is lead singer Sabrina Stewart, and let it be known she's got a big crush on rock. Yes it is a young love but just think, the best is yet to come. Wait 'til her first heartbreak! (X)
(Relaxative/PMB#31, 3288 21st Street/San Francisco, CA 94110)

FLUX OF PINK INDIANS



LIVE STATEMENT

FLUX OF PINK INDIANS "Live Statement" CD

This band, if you don't know, was UK punk rock institution. They were there, right along with CRASS, the MOB, ZOUNDS, and CONFLICT, laying the pavement for

what punk rock was supposed to be about. For some reason this band gets no respect, but this disc is great and raw, seething with real live, actual anger and the belief that people would actually listen to what punk rock was trying to say. I only wish the recording was better quality. (SB)
(Overground/PO Box 1NW/Newcastle Upon Tyne NE99 1NW/ENGLAND)



FLYING LUTTENBACHERS "The Truth Is A Fucking Lie" CD

I don't know much about this band. This CD is filled with totally disjointed noise excursions, with some

Japanese influences, as well as jazz. It doesn't really tread on any new territory, and it certainly isn't as dangerously revolutionary as the band would have you think. Perfect music to peel your off skin to. (SB)
(Explode/PO Box 82/Chicago, IL 60690)



FOREIGN LEGION "The Years Gone By" 7" EP

Sometimes it's better to let dead dogs lie. These vets used to be called DEAD ON ARRIVAL, gigged in the early 80s, and then broke up some

years later. This record is the product of their re-formation, but this 4-track 7" is the quintessential generic punk rock single, complete with the most basic, simple, count by numbers lyrics I've heard in years. Sorry to say, this is boresville. (JAW)
(Upstart/65A W. Madison Avenue #254/Dumont, NJ 07628)

THE FRACAS

"Always Drunk And Incapable Of Love" CD MISFITSy-style vocals overlaid onto what I would call a mid-80s Mystic Records sound. The FRACAS are a band that I really enjoy live, and this CD is solid and growing on me. (JC)
(Axis/1431A Park Street/Alameda, CA 94501)



F.Y.P. "Come Home Smelly" CD

Comprised of this title track, taken from their last full-length, and 7 other unreleased tracks, this F.Y.P. CD (which may be their last) rules.

Even if you hate them, you still know that they rule. While they're on the faster, sloppier side of the punk rock spectrum, this later stuff seems to be getting way poppier, almost like a demented "Grease" soundtrack. Enjoy, and beware TOYS THAT KILL.
(Theologian/PO Box 1070/Hermosa Beach, CA 90254)

GEE STRINGS

"Bad Reputation/Dullish" 7"

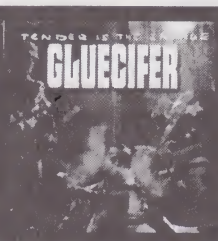
A German band with a strong female singer that tends to remind me a little of VICE SQUAD, although I could do without the JOAN JETT cover. I love JOAN, but this song has been covered way too much, and the GEE STRINGS' version is pretty straightforward. (JC)
(Stereodrive-GreenHell/VonSteuben-Strasse 17/48143 Munster/GERMANY)

GITS

"Seafish Louisville" CD

A welcome cleaning of the vaults from this deservedly legendary Seattle band. Combine the controlled fury of DILLINGER 4 with the straightforward rocking anthems of early STIFF LITTLE FINGERS, and you'll have some idea of

the wonder that was the GITS. Better yet, snap up this essential release. Their first EP, together with flawless live tracks and even three unreleased gems. Includes one of them interactive CD-Rom things, with a video, photos and lyrics. (RK)
(Broken Rekids/PO Box 460402/San Francisco, CA 94146)



GLUCIFER "Tender is the Savage" enhanced CD

It's hard to not like GLUCIFER. Even if Biff sounds like SAMMY HAGAR crooning GLENN DANZIG, their songs are just too damn good.

GLUCIFER hit you with a little bit of everything rock, and few bands do it so well. Just witness the rocker "Sputnik Monroe." If I were to give this CD a bad review it couldn't change a thing. (X)
(SubPop/PO Box 20645/Seattle, WA 98102)

G.O.H.

"In G.O.H. We Trust" EP

This Amsterdam band plays your standard (derivative) English sounding Oi/ streetpunk. which fails to excite me as much now as it did 20 years ago. Oops, bad review, so now the skinheads are gonna go aggro on me. (Yay, gang war!) Hey, bribe me with beer at the Pits bar next time if you want a good review, ya boneheads. (TS)
(no label listed)

GOLDEN GUINEAS

"Shit or Bust" 7"

This one practically sizzles as it spins around my turntable. A real ballsy, loud recording that sounds like it was done in one take, and featuring a cover of a SUPERCHARGER song. It's good to hear my Scottish brethren tearing it up. (JC)
(Estrus/PO Box 2125/Bellingham, WA 98227)

GOOD INTENTIONS

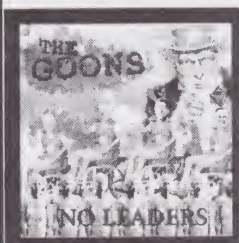
"The World is My Fuse" CD

This is "alternative rock", radio-style lazy. The first track sounds like SMASHING PUMPKINS, and personally I don't care for the whispering, tortured vocals. Those of you who like FM radio such as CREED, KORN, and BUSH might like this, but I doubt it since it's not on the radio. (X)
(Espo/PO Box 63/Allston, MA 02134)

GOONS

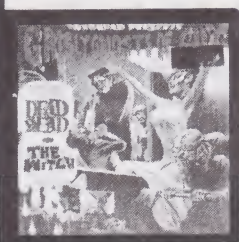
"No Leaders" CD

No one at Hit List knew what to do with this CD. It's so punk it's hardcore, sans the



halftime beat which they waited a whole 4 songs to break out. I guess they're good. The CD is produced really well, the band plays tight, and I'd be interested if the singer was a girl. Pretty

macho stuff. (X)
(American Punk/802 South
Broadway/Baltimore, MD 21231)

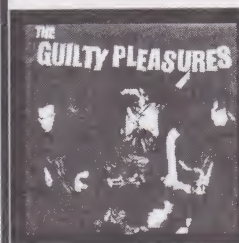


GRISLY GHOSTS OF GUY

"Dead Head/The Witch" 7"

This is self-proclaimed "horror-punk", which immediately ushers images of the MISFITS into our collective punk

rock memories. But this band is not a MISFITS rip-off - they're Scottish guys from the EXPLOITED and The GIN GOBLINS and they're better musicians. Hence there's a guitar solo or two (but not in the bad, 70's way), and the music is rooted more in early 60's garage. (SB)
(Deadhead Comics/27 Candlemaker Row/Edinburgh/SCOTLAND)



GUILTY PLEASURES

"Trash Bag" 7"
This is some good shit. From the remnants of Bloomington, IL bands like the DEFILERS, plus some Chicago idiots, come the GUILTY PLEASURES, who play

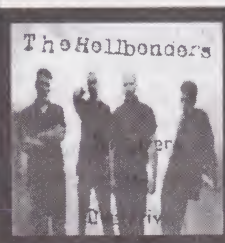
really trashy, snotty, garage-y (but in a good way) rock'n'roll. With great raw vocals and serious DEAD BOYS guitar stylings, this record is a much needed shot in the arm for the really dead, done-for, sad state of current r'n'r. (JAW)
(Sack O' Shit/PO Box 308/Kankakee, IL 60901)

HANGMEN

"Metallic I.O.U." CD

In the Dynamite Jet Saloon, you'll hear me bitchin' all day about how come no American bands can still deliver the bloody-knuckled, punch-drunk, blues-punk-punch of the Australian rock scene. The HANGMEN are an exception. World-weary, raw-deal, raunchy rock'n'roll from the rock-bottom, gut-bucket voice of experience. Underworld cowboy Bryan Small and his dangerous cast of nasties, including once and future COMA-TONES guitarist, the awesome Jimmy James and his bag of abrasive MICK TAYLOR-meets-BRIAN JAMES-style guitar treachery. Fine songwriting and a reverent cover of the LORDS OF THE NEW CHURCH classic, "Russian Roulette".

(JDM)
(Acetate/2020 Broadway, 2nd Floor/Santa Monica, CA 90404)



HELLBENDERS

"Hangover In Overdrive" 7" EP

I'm amazed that Junk Records hasn't signed these guys yet. Fast and nasty punk'n'roll that reminds me of the NEW WAVE HOOKERS.

Definitely worth picking up. (JC)
(Gumshoe/5500 Prytania Street/PB 133/ New Orleans, LA 70115)

HELLROUTE 16

"Songs for Naughty Girls CD

Fronted by Jens, editor of Europe's prime defunct r'n'r magazine *Moshable*, who pretty much defined the look, I'll pardon these crazed Danes for the now boring naked-babe'n'flames imagery on the sleeve. The band, which actually had the balls to ask their local Hell's Angels chapter for a gig at the Angels own hangout and were turned down for "being too aggressive", deliver four no-frills, MOTORHEAD/NASHVILLE PUSSY/ZEKE-inspired tunes as expected. Although the guitar sound needs serious improvement, there's no denying the potential in "Sky Above Death Below" and "Motherfucker Ride". (TS)
(Hellroute 16/Kretavej 17, 3 th/2300 Copenhagen S/DENMARK)



HEPCAT

"Push 'n Shove" CD

You trad skinheads should love HEPCAT, an excellent 7-piece ska band with that old-time, early 60's rocksteady sound, not unlike ROLAND

ALPHONSO and the Jamaican/British scene of that time. They have amazing, silky vocals and such easy-going rhythms that they could chill out all of Wall street. This disc has got such a creeping, sexy cool to it that I can't believe that these guys are playing out now. (SB)

(Hellcat/2798 Sunset Blvd./L.A., CA 90026)



HITCHCOCKS

"Psyche!" CD-R

This series sounded promising, but has turned out to be somewhat of a bust. Most of the CDs that I've had to review

suffer from bad production and so-so

REVIEWS

songwriting. Which isn't to say that this band doesn't show promise, they do. I guess I should just be looking at these short-run dealies as new-fangled demo tapes. (JER)
(Mutant Pop/5010 NW Shasta/Corvallis, OR 97330)

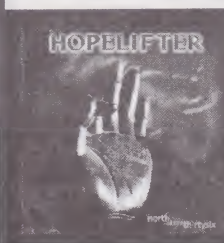


HOMELESS WONDERS

"I Can't Think" QD

This band can't quite decide what to settle on. At their best, they do some pretty fine snotty SCREAMING WEASELesque pop punk. But they have a

distressing tendency to slide into bizarre offbeat, indie-rock, and then there are a couple of attempts to do the whole math rock thing. Stick to the simple tuneage, dudes - that way you'll continue to rock. (RK)
(Suburban Home/PO Box 40757/Denver, CO 80204)

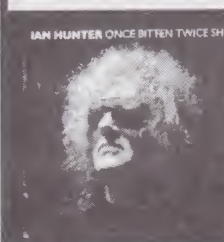


HOPELIFTER

"North Of The Thirty Six" CD

This thing blazes. I hate to bring this up, because this CD easily stands on its own merits, but HOPELIFTER is comprised of Andrew

Champion from SCREW 32 on vox and some of the most ingenious musicians floating around NorCal right now. Fans of SCREW 32, DAG NASTY, SWIZ, or FURRY 66 should go buy two of these right now. The fast parts rip, and the heavy parts could crush cars. (BAM)
(Sessions/15 Janis Way/Scotts Valley, CA 95066)



IAN HUNTER

"Once Bitten, Twice Shy" double CD

Mind you, I have all the respect in the world for IAN HUNTER. He was borrowing CHUCK BERRY riffs, teasing his hair, and banging

groupies when I was still shitting in my diapers. While there are tons of gems among these 40 tracks, you're also subjected to painful, early 80s rockstar-trying-to-be-hip New Wave synth-wanking and dull soundtrack tunes. All of MOTT's albums are worth getting (even if their pianos and saxes drive Jeff Bale up the wall), and IAN's early solo albums are perhaps preferable to this. (JC)
(Sony)

SHITLIST



IGNITE "A Place Called Home" CD

IGNITE do a damn fine job of melding late 80s-style SE hardcore with 90s SoCal melodic hardcore. Probably the closest comparison that

springs to mind is the more recent hardcore incarnation of GOOD RIDDANCE, but IGNITE are more seamlessly multidimensional musically than that. Think of NO USE FOR A NAME, if they also did lots of breakdowns, and finger pointing. (RK)

(TVT/23 E 4th Street/New York, NY 10003)

THEE IMPOSSIBLES "Shut Up and Play" CD

Very pop, very punk, and very amateurish. The ability to not care how good you are is very chic, but more often it's a cop out. That way, when the band inevitably fails they blame it on their lack of commitment. Too bad 'cuz I feel the material's stronger than that of their DARLINGTON and HASSLEHOFF peers. (X)

(Birthmark/PO Box 3701/Livermore, CA 94551)



THE JACK SAINTS "Rock and Roll Holocaust" CD

The JACK SAINTS are something to be witnessed live, but you gotta release product if ya wanna play live.

Their "here it is and

have some more" approach shines well thru this lo-fi MISFITS gorecore CD. With smart film bits peppered strategically between tracks, it makes for a good listen. If FORBIDDEN DIMENSION found a drummer, they'd have to "Cage Match" JACK SAINTS "Texas-style" for the belt. (X)

(Scooch Pooch/)

JOHNNY MOPED "Basically: The Best of..." CD

JOHNNY MOPED was one of the original over-the-top British funnypunk frontmen from the 1977 era, and this retrospective collection of his band's vitriolic songs proves that he was something of an unheralded genius. I loved classic singles like "No One" and "Darling, Let's Have Another Baby", and I also really liked his album, but listening to these (plus bonus tracks) again after the passage of so many years is truly a guilty pleasure. If songs like "VD Boiler" and "Groovy Ruby" don't make you pogo and grin from ear to ear, I feel

sorry for you. (JB)
(Chiswick/46-50 Steele Road/London NW10 7AS/ENGLAND)

JOLLY GREEN GIANTS

"Busy Body/Caught You Red Handed" 7"

Good ole' garage, complete with manic keyboards and 3-chord guitar slices. It's fine really, right at home on the Norton label, only it's so straightforward that nothing makes it terribly memorable, much less crucial. (SB)

(Norton/PO Box 646, Cooper Station /New York, NY 10276)



JONESES

"Criminal History" CD

This is the real deal ñ a retrospective collection of mid-80's material by the JONESES, who played trashed out r'n'r exactly how it should be played. These guys

were churning out tough-sounding DOLLS-inspired glam punk during an era when it wasn't generally considered "cool", which proves that they were way more hip and rockin' than the legions of generic hardcore bands that then dominated the SoCal scene. One listen to amazing songs like "Criminal", with their dirty twin guitars and snooty vocals, should inspire you to tease your longish locks, put on eye makeup, and bed down with a tattooed rocker babe. (JB)

(Sympathy/4450 California Place #303/Long Beach, CA 90807)



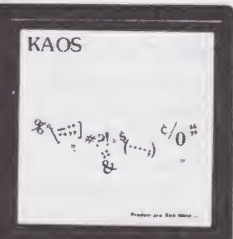
KAMIKAZES

"Time for Rock'n'Roll" 7" EP

Snooty punk'n'roll with some excellent guitar playing and a none-too-serious bad attitude. Although this EP was released on a German

label, the KAMIKAZES appear to be French. In any case, on the A-side you get two rockin' blasts of the type you'd expect to find on a label like Junk, and two poppier rockers on the flipside that remind me of the REAL KIDS. (JB)

(Alien Snatch/Morikeweg 1/74199 Untergruppenbach/GERMANY)



KAOS

"Alcohol Holiday/Top Secret" 7"

A reissue of the legendary 1980 LA punk classic that ended up on a "Killed By Death" comp and became a punk rocker's holy grail.

The music is as cool as ever, and the fact that this isn't the original shouldn't stop anyone from picking this one up and playing it at your neighbors. (SB)

(Dionysus/PO Box 1975/Burbank, CA 91507)



KEVIN K

"Magic Touch" CD

It's great to see axeslinger KEVIN K (ex-ROAD VULTURES) back in action with a new band. He's always specialized in writing and churning out

tasteful, moody, slightly glammish mid-tempo r'n'r tunes with lots of hooks, often with the help of famous guests like Ratboy and Cheetah Chrome, and in this latest incarnation one can definitely hear echoes of outfits like the ONLY ONES and NIKKI SUDDEN. That's a very good thing if you love rock'n'roll, as I do. (JB)

(Vicious Kitten/GPO Box 20/Canberra ACT 2601/AUSTRALIA)

KIDNAP

"79-85" CD

Wow. KIDNAP were one of France's greatest early 80's "skunk" bands, along with the likes of the TROTSKIDS and KOMINTERN SECT, so I was thrilled to get my hands on this retrospective reissue of their LPs. This is what streetpunk is supposed to sound like ñ roaring guitars, a powerful rhythm section, great singalong choruses, and superior songs ñ and even the lyrics are worth reflecting on. An LP that blows away 95% of the current so-called Oi releases. (JB)

(Upstart/65A W. Madison Avenue/Dumont, NJ 07628)



KILLINGTONS

"Magnum" CD

Judging by the name, I had expected this band to be yet another RAMONES-inspired derivative bucket of drivel. Nothing could be further from the truth.

God appears nowhere in the thanks list, let alone the heavens, and they play indie-rock. But if you like undistorted guitars in a not-too-many tempo/riff change, choppy emo kind of way, you might like this. (RK)

(Meg/747 W Katella Avenue, Suite 110/Orange, CA 92867)

KILL-A-WATTS

"Mutant Brain/Treat Me Like a Jerk" 7"

Greg Lowery must be all hopped up on goofballs these days, since so much of the

music he's writing and releasing is really fast and un-77 punk-like. The KILL-A-WATTS let rip with two speedy tracks garage punkers featuring shrill female vocals, one of which is rather forgettable ("Mutant Brain"). But the flipside is quite good, and seems to have been inspired in part by LOLI & THE CHONES. (JB) (Rip Off/581 Maple Avenue/San Bruno, CA 94066)



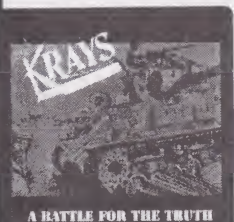
KING LOUIE ONE MAN BAND

"Walkin' and a Steppin' in the Fire/Walkin' With the Light" 7"

All I gotta say is that this guy is a HASIL ADKINS worshipper.

One dude who plays way twisted, primitive rock and roll. This is probably one of the best things I've gotten to review this time, 'cause it's so fucked-up sounding. Bonus points for the LOLI & THE CHONES t-shirt on the cover. (TL)

(Therapeutic/U.N.O. Box 534/New Orleans, LA 70148)



KRAYS

"A Battle For The Truth" CD

Shit-hot, ripping, heartfelt stuff from this old school band with decent lyrics. They follow the punk formula, but in this case

that's not bad since they sound as fresh as BAD RELIGION on their first two records. My friend George, he's a punk, dontcha know, says this rocks like 1984. (SB) (Temperance/PO Box 556/Somers Point, NJ 08244)

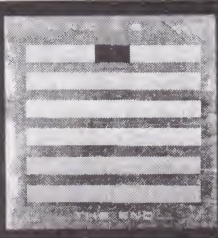


LANCASTER COUNTY PRISON

"Death Waltz 2000" CD

This is the best new punk I've heard since FLOGGING MOLLY. These guys have a punk rock bagpipe

player and a banjo player too, and they do a few traditional Scottish/Irish tunes (although I think they are from New York) mixed in with a bunch of ripping originals. They have a sense of humor thrown in with their politics, which makes it a lot more palatable. POGUES comparisons are a helluva compliment. (SB) (Coolidge/157 Coolidge Terrace/Wyckoff, NJ 07481)



LANDOS 45

"The End" CD EP

I'm pretty sure that this is the singer of the BOLLWEIGS and someone from 30 SECONDS DEEP. Two of these five songs were the bad cuts from their

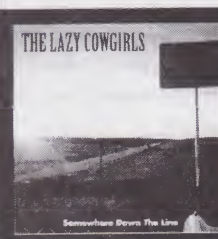
4-song 7", plus you get three more so-so tracks. Mid-tempo melodic punk/HC. I'll pass, but maybe it's your thing. (BAM) (Harmless/1437 W. Hood/Chicago, IL 60660)

LAUNDERETTES

"Rebel Love" 7" EP

60's-inspired garage punk from Norway. The LAUNDERETTES consist of three gals and one guy, and they generate a very appealing "girlpunk" ruckus. The guitarist has his trashy rockabilly and 60's chops down, and these are displayed to fine effect on all three tracks, the best of which is probably the title song. Yeah, baby. (JB)

(Sneakers/Almgrensv. 9A/1621 Gressvik/NORWAY)



LAZY COWGIRLS

"Somewhere Down the Line" CD

As great as the LAZY COWGIRLS are, I prefer them with the tag team guitar duo. I think this more countrified CD confirms my live

observations. The songs are there as always, but there's just not enough going on under Pat's proud vocals. Let's just leave it at that, because no one deserves to take shots at a band as true as the COWGIRLS. (X) (Sympathy/4450 California Place #303/Long Beach, CA 90807)

LES VIPERES/SUX EVULSORS

split 7" EP

LES VIPERES are a punky r'n'r band from Quebec with a sound that blends 77 riffs and a hint of 60's garage into an unwholesome cocktail, and "Eau de vie" is the more memorable of their two tracks. SUX EVULSORS are, as their name suggests, a hardcore band from France, although their songs have catchier choruses than is typical of today's tuneless thrash punk norm. These two make for strange bedfellows. (JB) (Fourdu/45 Rue Lothaire II, apt. 71/54000 Nancy/France)

LEWIS BLACK

"The White Album" CD

So we're reviewing comedy CDs now, eh? Let's see, he's a drunken, angry, over-

REVIEWS



intellectualized asshole who critiques the stupidity of everything around him. So, basically, he's one of us. Entertaining. (JC) (-isimist/PO Box 502631/Minneapolis, MN 55405)



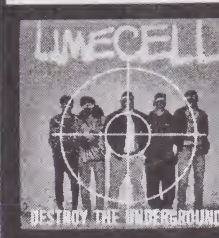
LIFETIME

"Seven Inches" CD

SAVES THE DAY may "rule", but they'd be beating each other off playing BLINK 182 rippoffs if it wasn't for LIFETIME. You need to get your history

straight, kids. LIFETIME, one of the best melodic, post-HC bands ever, with vocals and instrumentation that can kick almost anyone's ass, present you with a new CD. Tracks taken from the "Tinnitus" session, their first 7", and a comp track comprise this 11-song rocker. (BAM)

(Temperance/PO Box 556/Somers Point, NJ 08244)



LIMECELL

"Destroy the Underground" CD

You always know what you'll get with LIMECELL - speedy, tough-as-shit punk rock. This new CD is no different, as it contains twelve hard

hitters, including a killer cover of "Love Me Like A Reptile". As usual their songs are about living in Philly, being bored as hell, working your ass off just to pay the bills, and then living for the weekend to get fucked up, only to be broke again by Monday. Maybe that's why so many people can relate to them. (JAW) (Headache/PO Box 204/Midland Park, NJ 07432)

LINK CROMWELL & THE ZOO
"Crazy Like A Fox" CD

This is the first band featuring Lenny Kaye, compiler of the "Nuggets" compilation and guitarist for the PATTI SMITH GROUP (among other things). This CD contains their one and only single, which features a pretty good folk rock protest song (the title cut) and a bouncier dance tune ("Shock Me"), and 13 live tracks recorded in 1966 at Rutgers U. The live show consists mainly of well-known covers, together with one goofy "original", and this release is more interesting as an historical document

SHITLIST

than as a musical statement. (JB)
(Norton/Box 646, Cooper Station/New York, NY 10276)

LOMBARDIES

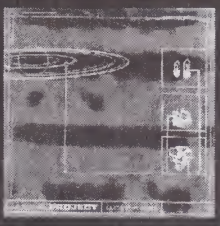
"Throw Your Love Away" LP

Snot-nosed kids playing snot-nosed punk in snot-nosed Boston. There's a plethora of similar bands out there, but there's something about these guys that sets them apart. They seem to have their roots firmly in classic punk and rock'n'roll. This was a thoroughly enjoyable record, so when they stop dressing like tools, people will probably take the band seriously. (JC)
(Lawless/PO Box 689/Hingham, MA 02043)

LOUDMOUTHS/VALENTINE KILLERS

split 7"

More of what you've come to expect from the LOUDMOUTHS - screamy, powerful punk rock. The VALENTINE KILLERS play in a more DEAD BOYS-y rock 'n'roll vein. A solid pairing that would make for drunken revelry at your favorite seedy club downtown. (JC)
(Empty/PO Box 12034/Seattle, WA 98102)



LUCKY STRIKE

"The Mercury Project" CD

This band has a female vocalist with a great, strong, melodic voice. Unfortunately, she can't carry a collection of limp, turgid,

uninspired, nondescript punk offerings. God is ranked numero uno on the thanks list, but perhaps it's part of the work of Satan to make all punk bland and instantly forgettable. (RK)

(Fastmusic/401 Broadway #2011/New York, NY 10013)

MAINE

"Motor Home" CD

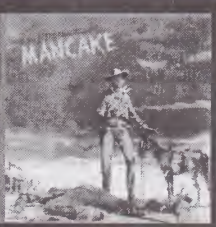
I'm not quite sure how you would really describe this band. I guess they are into that modern, eclectic emo groove. Largely clean guitars, with the odd plunge into frenzied distortion. They actually remind me a lot of the early pre-rockist MEAT PUPPETS. Add a dash of BLACKTOP CADENCE, and you'll get some idea. They're really good at what they do, and I'm sure they'd be (deservedly) huge if they were on Revelation. (RK)

(Tralla Records/www.trallarecords.com)

MAJOR ACCIDENT

"Representation Not Reality/Step By Step" 7"

The "Clockwork Orange"-styled British streetpunks return with a bang after what I assume was a considerable hiatus. Fortunately, both songs here are terrific numbers marked by a big, crunchy production, loud guitars, and lots of cool melodies and choruses. Most bands that carry on and on or try to make a comeback only embarrass themselves, but these guys may well be exceptions to that rule. A tip-top release. (JB)
(Upstart/65A West Madison Avenue #254/Dumont, NJ 07628)



MANCAKE

"We Will Destroy You" CD EP

From the band that claims to be "part man, part pancake", we are treated to gut-throttling sludge rock that reminds me of the

MELVINS and early 90's Touch and Go label stuff. Given the dilemma these poor chaps were dealt, the

part pancake situation I mean, it's no wonder they're making such an angry, stomping ruckus. And I thought this was going to be some type of homoerotic, brute sexuality-type thing. (SB)

(Art Monk/PO box 6332/Falls Church, VA 22040)



MANGES

"Mandy/Breakdown" 7"

In case you hadn't been paying attention, the MANGES are the best thing to come out of Italy since fettuccini. They might also be the

best pop punk band in the world, and the world's best kept secret. Two more bouncy, upbeat, RAMONES-style rockers, and yet another notch in their belts. (BAM)
(608 Kisses/PO Box 3127/La Crosse, WI 54602)



MAN OR ASTROMAN

"A Spectrum Of Infinite Scale" CD

MAN OR ASTROMAN continue to thrill and delight, since they weave in and out of sonic space ragas with tricky guitar work and

state of the art sci-fi effects. This CD is more captivating than the last couple of releases that I have heard from them. If you are an old

fan you won't be disappointed, and if you've never checked them out this may be a good starting point. (JC)

(Touch and Go/PO Box 25520/Chicago, IL 60625)

MASHERS

"Baby I'm Your Man" LP

Southern-fried sounding rockin' punk in the vein of NASHVILLE PUSSY and the HOOKERS, but with a more bluesy, garagey feel to it. Early POISON 13 comes to mind, and the songs are about gettin' drunk and gettin' laid. Have sex with your thirteen-year old cousin while listening to this. (TL)
(Sack O'Shit Records/PO Box 308/Kankakee, IL 60901)

MEDVEDS

"Bad Nipple From The Sun" 7" EP

The same sort of twisted humour as on their other 7"er. This one's a little more melodic, but it's just about as good a listen. They have two singers, but I like the guy with the deep, gnarled-up vocals the best, he's kinda sexy. These guys probably drink a lot of cheap beer, then throw-up in their friend's bed. (SB)
(Fan Attic/PO Box 391494/Cambridge, MA 02139)

MERLE HAGGARD

"If I Could Only Fly" CD

Diverse artists such as MERLE (one of the original country outlaws), TOM WAITS, and BUJU BANTON are putting records out on Epitaph now, perhaps for exposure to a younger, hipper audience. I guess JOHNNY CASH threw the doors wide open with his Def American releases. "If I Could Fly" is MERLE's best, most coherent album in decades. I think a lot of the tunes on this album couldn't have been released on a Nashville label due to lyrical content, lack of commercialism, or a stance too far away from current country aesthetics. "Wishing All These Old Things Were New" could have been a great duet with DAVID ALLEN COE, "Bareback" smacks of BOB WILLIS, and "Honkytonk Mama" might of even been a LEON REDBONE tune, but the rest is just pure MERLE. (JC)

(Epitaph/2798 Sunset Blvd/L.A., CA 90026)



METROS

"I Gotta Go/Lookin' For Danger" 7"

Sloppy garagey brat-punk that sounds like it ought to be from Detroit. The METROS have that same indifferent, snot-nosed

attitude that everyone whose ever done anything good has. The only problem is that

this 7" is too short. (SB)
(Dirtnap/PO Box 21249/Seattle, WA 98111)

McRACKINS

"Too Tough To Die" LP

This is the last installment of the RAMONES cover album series, unless some smart-ass band tries to cover "Acid Eaters" or "It's Alive". The McRACKINS do a fine job reining in one of the last great RAMONES albums. Everything's limited and special, as usual. Grab one quick, while supplies last. (JC)
(Coldfront/PO Box 8345/Berkeley, CA 94707)

MIND DRIVER

"Ten Percent of Nothing" CD

On "Ten Percent of Nothing" MIND DRIVER provides some high energy songs for BAD RELIGION types. The total package isn't so spectacular, but it's an A+ effort from guys I don't necessarily believe to be lifers. (X)
(Wendy-O/Santa Fe Springs, CA)

MOCK ORANGE

"The Recordplay" CD

I'm guessing that this is the new wave of major label emo. I've never heard of Lobster Records, but with Mark Trombino producing it must be big budget

and it has all the jerky, discordant edges of that modern emo sound, but they're all smoothed out. Laid back, pleasant, and almost relaxed, but with enough pop elements to keep most folks satisfied. Think of a super-produced ELLIOTT. (RK)

(Lobster/PO Box 1473/Santa Barbara, CA 93102)

MOONEY SUZUKI

"People Get Ready" CD

The MOONEY SUZUKI are super cool. They play a soul-stirring high energy rock and roll that gave me chills. They seem to be

heavily influenced by "Nuggets"-type bands, as well as the classic MC5/MITCH RYDER/Detroit sound. A lot of bands try to play this way, but these fuckers seem to be the genuine article. They play from the heart. Hell, yeah! (JC)

(Estrus/PO Box 2125/Bellingham, WA 98227)

MORTICIA'S LOVERS

"Take a Ride With Us" LP

These dagos are big worshippers of such Frisco bands as the MUMMIES and



Baby DDT", and "Come on Up". They're pretty darn good, especially because they're Italian like me. (TL)

(Violator/c/o Angelo Caravaggi/Via Cisiago 3/29028 Ponedell'Olio Piacenza/ITALY)



MOTOCHRIST

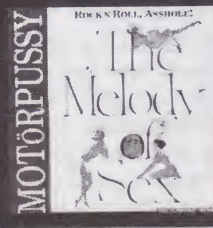
"i666-Pack" CD

Dark, nasty rock'n'roll on a hearseride to Hell. Expect no surprises ñ devil worship banter and a fistful of camp.

MOTOCHRIST gleefully accept rides from Satan

and they'd sit pretty in a SUPERSUCKERS, GAZA STRIPPERS, STREETWALKIN CHEETAHS carpool. Hitch a ride. (X)

(R.A.F.R./11054 Ventura Blvd., Suite 205/Studio City, CA 91064)



MOTORPUSSY

"The Melody of Sex" 7" EP

Virtually everything that comes out on Germany's Incognito label is worth picking up, since it's

guaranteed to be old school p-rock. This MOTORPUSSY EP is a bit poppier and New Wave-ish than one might expect, since it features an organ and some goofy funnypunk singing, but it's nonetheless worth your attention. The lyrics are pretty humorous, as song titles like rock'n'roll, Asshole!", "Getting Older", and "I Hate This Town" would suggest. (JB)
(Incognito/Senefelderstrasse 37A/70176 Stuttgart/GERMANY)



MY RUIN

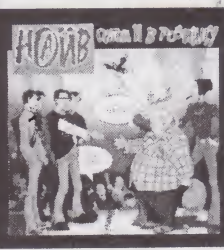
"Speak And Destroy" CD

Reminds me of "Power Of Pussy"-era BONGWATER meets MARYLIN MANSON, minus the wit, charm, and intelligence of ANN

MAGNUSON or the basic musical integrity of either band. This recording is trite, pretentious, and just downright pathetic. I'm sure any bad reviews this "artist" gets will have her squealing about how the asshole

REVIEWS

reviewer doesn't understand how deep and intense she is. She's just so blasphemous and shocking! (JC)
(Spitfire/no address)



NAIVE

"Wholesale or Retail" CD

The Russian punks are back again with another full-length, but this time they've shifted from a PISTOLS-inspired attack to a poppier, guitar-

heavy sound not unlike Germany's DIE TOTENHOSEN (or, at times, the CULT). Apparently, this has generated some consternation among their older fans, but you can't argue with the results. I really like a lot of their new songs, which sometimes veer toward rock slickness without sacrificing any guitar power. (JB)

(S.O.S, no address listed)

NEW YORK DOLLS

"A Hard Days Night" CD

Over 20 tracks recorded live in the studio as a demo. Live and demo are usually two words that make me shy away from a release, but this CD rules since any "off" notes just add to the beauty that is the DOLLS. Extra snotty, very garagey, raw as hell, and totally brilliant. There is even some during and after song banter that gives you some insight into these "carpenters", who built the foundations of what was to become one of the three greatest rock bands ever. (BAM)

(Norton/PO Box 646, Cooper Station/New York, NY 10276)

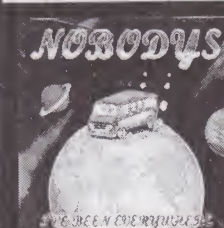


NICE GUY EDDIE

"I Was There" CD

If these guys had a stronger drummer, they'd be a decent, Fat Wreck-ish band that kinda sounds like NO USE FOR NAME. Since their drummer could

use a pointer or two (sorry), they're pretty boring. (JER)
(no address listed)



NOBODYS

"I've Been Everywhere" CD

Although they end up butchering most of these songs, this is a pretty good idea. The

SHITLIST

NOBODYS decided to give props to the all the bands they've toured with by releasing an all-covers CD full of their songs. The bands covered include the the QUEERS, CHIXDIGGIT and DIGGER. Eleven songs in all. (JER) (Suburban Home/PO Box 40757/Denver, CO 80204)

NOCTURNAL PROJECTIONS

"Worldview" 7" EP

Poorly-produced New Zealand "old school" punk originally released on a cassette in 1981. The NOCTURNAL PROJECTIONS would fit very comfortably on the excellent Kiwi "Hate Your Neighbor" compilation LP/CD, although their songs aren't anywhere near as hook-filled as those of better-known groups like the SCAVENGERS. Still, this EP has an appealingly primitive quality and nasty to-the-point guitar riffing, and the two cuts on the B-side positively shred. (JB)

(Raw Power/PO Box 7127/Wellesley Street/Auckland/NEW ZEALAND)

NUEVO CATECISMO CATOLICO

"To Hell And Back" CD /10"

One of the longer-lasting outfits on the Euro-rock front that's been overlooked everywhere outside their native country Spain, in spite of several enjoyable punk/hardcore/speedmetal hybrid albums that each show proficient riffing skills. (Tight riffage being trabajo numero uno in "El Cachondo" Slug's book). This time around N.C.C. deliver the goods just as tightly, with substantially less metal damage, and there's even a LOVESLUG cover to guarantee a good review, albeit with the thickest

Spanish accent I've heard since the HOT DOGS. (TS)

(no label listed)

THE NUMBERS



NUMBERS

"The Spirit In Your Coffee" 7"

Snotty ass rock & roll with a real SEX PISTOLS feel to it. Great-sounding production on these instant head boppers.

I'm looking forward to more. (BAM) (Hostage/8861 Bolin Circle./Huntington Beach, CA 92646)

PANDORAS

"Psychedelic Sluts" CD

All you need to know is that this PANDORAS CD contains 21 of their unreleased mid-80's

studio recordings, including demos and some songs from their projected but unreleased "Come Inside" LP. The PANDORAS were my all-time favorite femme fatale garage band, and here one can even hear earlier versions of some of the hard rockin' songs that appeared on their final babelicious 12i, which I also loved. One listen to terrific tracks like "Nobody", "After He's Gone", "Take the Lead", and "She's Ugly" should convince everyone that Paula Pierce's premature death was a great tragedy for rock'n'roll. (JB) (Erekta/c/o Bomp/PO Box 7112/Burbank, CA 91510)



THE PANIC BUTTONS VS. THE 3D'S

split 7" EP

Two garage punk bands, four garage punk songs. The PANIC BUTTONS do an OK version of the NEW YORK DOLLS'

"Trash", but my fave

here is an original tune by the 3D'S called "Go-Go Zombies", though that's not saying much. (TL)

(Teen Fink/2344 Dug Hill Road/Browns Boro, AL 35741)



PEEPS

"Stiletto" 7" EP

The PEEPS are a trashy girlpunk band that remind me a bit of the TRASHWOMEN, and on this record the B-side hit "Rock-n-roll Man" totally kicked my ass.

Another winner from Lipstick. Let's hope there's plenty more where this came from in the future! (JC)

(Lipstick/1154 Powell Street/Oakland, CA 94608)



PENNYWHEEL

"Swift Kick To The Jimmy" CD

Fairly uninspired indie-style pop/rock. I'm sure these guys really dig the REPLACEMENTS (later), SOUL ASYLUM, or perhaps the NILS. All

mid-tempo stuff, like MATERIAL ISSUE minus the catchy tunes and de-rocked. It all trundles off happily to absolutely nowhere, and not even particularly quickly. (RK)

(Artist Evolution/www.artistevolution.com)

PETER PAN

"Killing Machine" CD

The second longplayer from possibly the

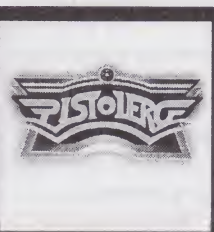
biggest name in Holland's "sleazero" scene, which roughly takes its lead - with mixed results - from Scandinavia. Calling it "Speed Rock" themselves, the oddly-named 3-piece dumps more flaming skull imagery on the masses than I can bear. Their roots show big time in a handful of heavily psychobilly/metal-oriented tunes, but the rest rocks and rolls nicely, for which the solid, beefy production is a big plus. Some of the bad boy lyrics register painfully heavy on the lunkhead-o-meter, but give 'em a listen. (TS) (no label listed)

THE PINKZ

"USA/YOU'RE TEARIN' ME APART" 7"

Awesome chick powerpop rock and roll from ex-LOLI & THE CHONES' drummer Michelle Santamaria, along with ex-BITCHSCHOOL and FEVERS members. This band kicks every other girl band's ass, and even give the DONNAS and the BOBBYTEENS a big run for their money. Unlike most girl bands, they can all actually play well, and here they do covers of PAUL COLLIN'S BEAT's "USA" and - my fave - TEENAGE HEADS' "You're Tearin' Me Apart". This rules. (TL)

(C&P 2000-Radio Beat/PO Box 8198/Belleflower, CA 90707)



PISTOLERO

CD

Straight-up catchy, hooky rock'n'roll. My favorite songs are "Sweet Thing" and "Bender." I saw these guys in St.

Paul/Minneapolis a few

months ago, and they were awesome live. The singer has a great, whiny, snotty voice reminiscent of Peepin' John (of VANILLA WHORES and FLAKES fame). These guys are good ol' boys. (TL) (Sign of the Devil, no address listed)

IGGY POP

"Ave. B" CD

A painfully unlistenable examination of the futility of even folk heroism. One minute IG feels obliged to assume some role as a jazzbo survivor/elder statesfigure dispelling wisdom, the next he still wants to fuck his nazi girlfriend on the hardwood floor. When he tries to give the purists what he thinks they want - adolescent riff-rock and lyrics about Detroit - we end up with comicbook punk albums like "Instinct" or "Naughty Little Doggy", which is OK by me. I usually defend IG's right to boss around retarded hairmetal goons and for-hire commercial producers and studio hacks in order to have Radio Hits and enjoy the economic security he's certainly entitled to, but IG probably oughta consider collaborating

with creative equals who can still rock, like maybe Brother Wayne Kramer or Brian James or Cheetah Chrome, or even Ratboy, 'cuz this shit is just embarrassing. (JDM)

PORK DUKES

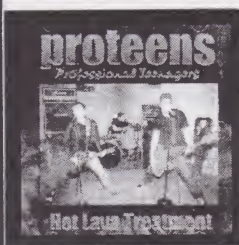
"Live EP"

I've always suspected that these Island Apes were a "pub rock" band that tried to make it big during the first punk wave. They failed in spite of (or perhaps due to) putting out a rather cool album, which had some of the most sexist (i.e., chuckle-able) lyrics around at the time. Since those olden days, the MENTORS and GG ALLIN reset the bar a notch or two higher in the crude, go-for-the-gross-out lyric dept., so the PORK DUKES mainly succeed in appealing to the nostalgic sentiments of old farts like myself. (TS)

PRE-TEENS

"Why Don't You Marry It?" CD

This debut LP from SF's own co-ed trio is creating quite a buzz, since it blends catchy rhythms, personal lyrics from the gut, and edgy melodic vocals. Recommended for fans of SLEATER KINNEY, BRATMOBILE, and LE TIGRE. (Sassy Wench/Cheetah's/PO Box 4442/Berkeley, CA 94704)



PROTEENS

"Hot Lava Treatment" CD

Did you know that semen has more than 40% of the daily recommended amount of protein, and approximately 12

grams of fat per serving? That's useful info if it's the only protein you have to rely on, as this is a stereotypical, two-chord, dual vocal, loving the RAMONES type of power-punk. At least they do it well, and they're probably having fun whilst working through youthful issues as "professional teenagers". (SB) (Imperfekt/PO Box 2846/Columbia, MD 21045)

RABIA POSITIVA

"A Volar" CD

A great disc chock full of catchy melodic Spanish hardcore. Think of bands like GAMEFACE, or early rockin' FACE TO FACE, or post Dave Smalley DAG NASTY, with Spanish vocals. I always much prefer to hear folks singing in their own language, and this works a treat. For everyone (and I can't be the only one) rapidly overdosing on this genre, this really is the proverbial breath of fresh air. (RK) (Tralla Records/www.trallarecords.com)



RAGINI HORMONES

"iOh So Sickinini Puke Rock Ni Roll" 7" EP

I didn't really want to like these guys, with their blurry porn on the cover and RAMONES wannabe stances on the back, but they're

actually pretty damn good. They sound like the vintage QUEERS, along the lines of iProud Tradition" or iLook Ma No Flannel", and they crammed eight songs on this EP, so they're alright by me. (JER)

(Stardumb/PO Box 21145/3001 AC Rotterdam/HOLLAND)

RALPH GEAN

"A Star Unborn" CD

Excommunicated Mormon, polygamist, and self-described "Guitar Pickin' Teabag" RALPH GEAN sings about severed body parts ("The Bobbit Song"), death ("Homicidal Me", "Granny's Grave") and life's hardships ("The Asshole Song", "Wearin' That Loved On Look"). Making things weirder still, there are two songs about rain, one of which is sung in Japanese. Fans of extraterrestrial life-forms such as the LEGENDARY STARDUST COWBOY and ROKY ERIKSON are advised to check out this "Star-Trekkin' RocknRoll Cowboy" freak. (TS)

(World Serpent Distribution/Unit 717 Seager Buildings, Brookmill Rd/London SE8 4HL/ENGLAND)

RANDY HOLDEN

"Early Works, 1964-66" CD

Before BLUE CHEER was the OTHER HALF, and before both were two bands where dynamic guitarist RANDY HOLDEN first honed his chops. This CD contains the singles and unreleased recordings of both his surf band, the FENDER IV, and his garage psych group, the SONS OF ADAM. I'm impressed with the heavy reverb guitar sound of the FENDER IV (and love their one track with vocals, "You Better Tell Me Now") even though I'm not a surf aficionado, but the SONS OF ADAM really shine with axe-wowing rockers (like "Take My Hand" and "Saturday's Son") and moody, bittersweet numbers (like "Without Love"). (JB)

(Captain Trip/3-17-14 Minami-Koiwa/Edogawa ku/Tokyo/JAPAN)

RED LONDON

"Streetlife: The Best of..." CD

My recollections of this UK punk band were fuzzy and not particularly fond, but to my surprise this CD turned out to be loaded with catchy mid-tempo streetpunk songs. Tracks like "Once Upon a Generation", "Days Like These", and i48 Reasons" impress mightily

with their winning combination of tunefulness, hummable background vocals, and raw guitars. Although not every song here is up to the high standards set by those tracks, I don't have any qualms whatsoever about recommending this release. (JB)

(Knock Out/Postfach 100716/46527 Dinslaken/GERMANY)

THE REIGN/[UNKNOWN GROUP]

split 7"

THE REIGN crank out a superior moody garage rocker dating from late 1967. Not only is "Zippered Up Heart" a fine bittersweet number in its own right, but it has far greater than usual historical significance in that it was the first known recording featuring young Johnny Genzale (later to attain fame as JOHNNY THUNDERS) on guitar. "I Had Enough" is an amateurish folk punk number with DYLANesque vocals and a decent chorus, made by a long-forgotten band. Kudos to Norton. (JB)

(Norton/Box 646, Cooper Station/New York, NY 10276)

RETARDED

"Let's Go In My Bedroom" LP

Those Italian guys sure do love the RAMONES. You know what else they love? Girls. I guess you probably know what they sound like by now, and they're actually not half bad. (JER) (No Name No Logo/Via Barontoli 420/53010 S. Rocco a Pilli (SI)/ITALY)



RIFFS

"White Line Kids/Kick Time Suicide" 7"

Coming to you in fabulous mono! A great 7" that sounds like a classic KILLED BY DEATH track. Seek this one out and buy two

copies, as it will probably be super collectable in about 6 months. (JC)

(Tombstone/Box 1463/Clackamas, OR 97015)

RIFF RANDELLS

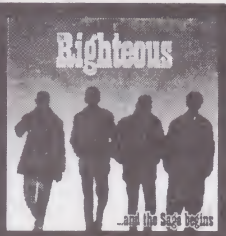
"Riff Randells Theme" 7" EP

I can't believe that no one else has thought to use this great name for their band before! Paying homage to PJ Soles, the RAMONES, and "Rock and Roll High School" via your moniker practically guarantees a cool band. Three little girls, one old guy ("I'm 14, 'I'm 37") and they do the DONNAS thing so well they should join them on a bill sometime. Yummy. (SB)

(Mint/PO Box 3613/Vancouver, BC V6B)

SHITLIST

3Y6/CANADA)



THE RIGHTEOUS "And The Saga Begins" CD

Produced by Carl from the TEMPLARS, Sweden's RIGHTEOUS play rather melodic street rock with gruff vocals. Almost all of

the songs are sung in English, so we know all the topics covered here...from drinking and fucking to upping the system to ridding the streets of various unsavory characters to killing cops to being oppressed. The strong points here are the gruff vocals and singalong choruses, the weak point that you've probably heard it all before. (JAW)

(Chapter 11-TKO/4104 24th Street #103/San Francisco, CA 94114).



RUNNIN' RIOT "Reclaim The Streets" CD

For any of you street-punker types yearning for the days of the OPPRESSED, 4 SKINS, or perhaps CRIMINAL CLASS (the Brit

variety), look no further than this new(ish) Belfast band. They more than deliver the goods, with enough abrasive venom that they don't sound tired, jaded, or rehashed at all. The band really give the tacked-on live tracks some bollocks. It's great to see a resurgence of that old, slower Brit sound. (RK)
(TKO/4104 24th Street #103/San Francisco, CA 94114)

SAINT BUSHMILLS CHOIR "Give 'Em Enough Booze" CD EP

Picture, if you will, the rowdier elements of Seattle's notorious Anarchist Black Bloc, running amok on a three-day drinking binge, with only "Rum, Sodomy, And The Lash" as a soundtrack. Various Seattle punker types (ex-GITS and suchlike) put a raucous twist on four traditional Irish folk ditties, and do a medley. Comparisons to the POGUES are inevitable and obvious. Anyone who likes folk, Irish rebel songs, and/or drinking will dig this. (RK)
(Broken Rekids/PO Box 460402/San Francisco, CA 94146)

SCAT RAG BOOSTERS "Slickat" 7" EP

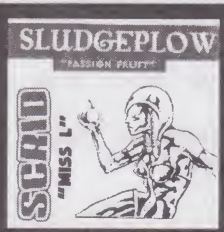
Downright and dirty bluesy punk'n'roll,

remescent of BLACK TOP and the LORD HIGH FIXERS. A pretty awesome harmonica squeals throughout the 7", and the recording is really noisy, loud, and fucked-up sounding. I like it, and my fave track on here is "Boo-Hoo Baby Blues", which is pretty toe-tappin'. (TL)
(Flying Bomb/PO Box 971038/Ypsilanti, MI 48197)

SCREECHING WEASEL "Teen Punks In Heat" CD

Get your ass to church, and start thanking god. SW is back! While I've been a fan for well over a decade now, I'll be the first to admit that "Emo", the bands previous effort, had me scared that the prime years were coming to a "screeching" halt. This record redeems them and is ideal for all of the kids who hail "My Brain Hurts" as the band's shining moment. The addition of a TEEN IDOL was a good call. Recording, songs, harmonies, and vocals on some of these gems that will instantly win you over, and if you don't like this you probably never liked them. (BAM)

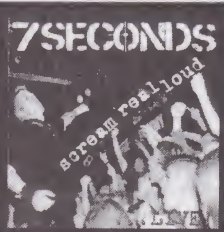
(Panic Button/PO Box 148010/Chicago, IL 60614)



SLUDGEFLOW "Miss L/Passion Fruit" split 7"

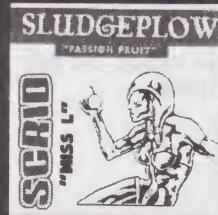
This is two takes on shrieking, throat-gurgling chaos and herky-jerky, panting fuck-rock, which serves the purpose of all out

catharsis for everyone within earshot. If you would like to "flip out", go "certifiably insane", or just go on a six-town shooting spree, I recommend that you get properly pumped up by playing this first. (SB)
(-ismist Recordings/PO Box 50263/Minneapolis, MN 55405)



7 SECONDS "Scream Real Loud" CD

A flawlessly played live greatest hits (with ALL of the obligatory audience singalongs) from their, er, punk/hardcore years, i.e., songs culled from their first couple of records and their last two. Not a hint of "New Wind", let alone a breath of the karma from those intervening years. If you're itching to sing along to 'Not Just Boys Fun' and '99 Red Ballons', this is the one for you. (RK)
(Side One Dummy/6201 Sunset Blvd, Suite 211/Hollywood, CA 90028)

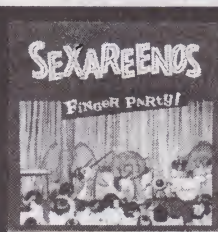


7/Otley LS21 1YB/ENGLAND)

SERVO "Now We Are Six" 7"

Imagine Kim from the FASTBACKS singing for a real high-energy JAWBREAKER. Four great songs. Go fetch! (BAM)

(Crackle!/PO Box



LES SEXAREENOS "Finger Party" 7" EP

I fuckin' love this way fun band. They rule live. Ex-SPACESHITS play totally fun BRENTWOODS /SUPERCHARGEResque rock and roll - as if they

were a '60s frat rock band. Great, catchy, fun songs, coupled with a loud, noisy, lo-fi recording. And they have a foxy guitar player. (TL)
(Sack O'Shit Records/PO Box 308/Kankakee, IL 60901)

SHOTWELL "Geneva Avenue Fall Out" LP

This is as much a Mission District scene report as it is a record. It's the kind of record that Probe magazine will probably write a 15-page article about, with friends of the band posing naked on the bar where the band was playing. Both bands are cool, and the record comes with a full zine. Pick one up. (JC)
(No/Box 14088/Berkeley, CA 94712)



SHUT UPS "Haul Off and Smack Your Ass" 7" EP

Fairly typical punk'n'roll in the vein of the CANDY SNATCHERS and ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN, but not as clever. The songs are

pretty straightforward, and "C'mere Kitty" is my fave since it has some good hooks. (TL)
(Junk/7071 Warner Avenue F, PMB 736/Huntington Beach, CA 92647)



SISTER KISSERS "Sister Kissers" CD

This is super fast, frantic rock. The vocalist sounds like his throat must look like beef jerky, and the band must be whipped up on the strongest amphetimes known to

man. Pretty cool, actually. For those with a big-ass axe to grind, chew on this. (SB)
(Disgraceland, no address listed)

69 CHARGER

"I've Got A Feelin'" 7" EP

From some one-horse town in Holland that even I've never heard of, even after living in this stamp-sized country for 37 years, hail three rubes with the hardly indigenous sounding names Richie Montana, G. Charger, and Roxa Roulette (a.k.a. "The Man Who Gambles With Death"). 69 CHARGER rocked out frantically to a crowd of (count 'em) 16 people when I saw them at my local watering hole, after which this single, which has "Ticket To Hell" and "Burnout Baby" on the flip, is a bit of a letdown. (TS)
(Roulette/Lijsterstraat 32/5735 ET Aarle-Rixtel/HOLLAND)

SLAUGHTER & THE DOGS

"Bite Back" CD

This, the second SLAUGHTER & THE DOGS long player, was less punked-out than their killer debut LP. But even though it was released years after "Do It Dog Style" and recorded by a somewhat different lineup (including Ed Banger, formerly of the NOSEBLEEDS), it was nonetheless filled with lots of appealing glam'n'roll tuneage and energy, not to mention loud guitars. A couple of the tracks are rather pedestrian, but it's hard to gripe after hearing fab blasts like "What's Wrong Boy", "All-Over Now", "Hell in New York", "It's In the Mind", and "One By One" (bonus single). (JB)
(Captain Oi/PO Box 501/High Wycombe, Bucks HP10 8QA/ENGLAND)



SLENDER

"Haunted Radio" CD

I've been hearing about SLENDER since I landed in SF. This was a great opportunity to hear 'em for real and I'm here to report it's a feel good album full of

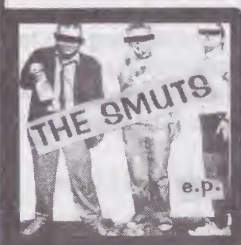
feeling bad songs. Meaning, I'd confidently spin it for SMOKIN' POPES, HAGFISH, and TURBO AC's fans. The lyrics get clever and the production's punchy and clear. Best of all, nothing sounds forced. (X)
(Guapo/PO Box 54/Salt Lake City, UT 84110)

SLICK SURFACE

"I'm Slick" 7" EP

Is this another one-man band? Rockabilly-esque style demented rock and roll, all played by SLICK and recorded at home on a 4-track. There's a great version of CHUCK BERRY's "Little Queenie", and "Shake That Thing"

rocks hard also. Thumbs up. (TL)
(Helltunes/1006 Polk/Victoria, TX 77901)



SMUTS

"Shock Therapy/Teenage Fuck-Up" 7"

This is so low budget that it's got all the promise of a classic. The vocals sound like they were recorded in the neighbor's

bathroom, and the two chords that we are treated too are raw like red meat. That's what punk's all about, right? Hell, I'd be pissed too, if I was living in Kankakee. (SB)
(Sack O'Shit/PO Box 308/Kankakee, IL 60901)

SNIX

"Archives, vol. 1: 1984-1985" CD

SNIX (skins backwards) were one of the premier French skinhead bands in the early 80s. I was unfamiliar with them until Vulture Rock thankfully put out this retrospective CD containing a number of their demo recordings (with a decent sound quality), as well as some live stuff, but these guys play mid-tempo and hard-as-nails yet passionate and anthemic songs. Some nice touches were the translated liner notes, featuring an explanation of where the band was coming from musically and politically, and the added interview in the booklet. (JAW)
(Vulture Rock/PO Box 4014/Aburquerque, NM 87196)

SOLDIER 76

"Balance Of Armour" CD

This CD is great. Some of the lyrics tend to be a bit on the patriotic side, but this is really tough, aggro Oi. They were even tougher live when they recently opened for the TEMPLARS. Their songs that kick ass, namely "Soldier 76", "On Our Way", and "Football Firm", really DO kick ass, which makes this record worth purchasing. (JAW)
(Vulture Rock/PO Box 4014/Aburquerque, NM 87196)



SOLEDAD BROTHERS

CD

This two-man acid blues duo from Toledo give you 15 unpolished classics in true JOHN LEE HOOKER homage. It really has no place in this magazine, except

that these are two white boys and their SOLEDAD BROS moniker honors the black liberation struggle of 1970. See what I mean?

REVIEWS

Maybe BILLY CHILDISH fans would dig it. They'll dig anything. (X)
(Estrus/PO Box 2125/Bellingham, WA 98227)

SONIC THRILLS



"Free, Fast, and Cool/Beautiful Noise" 7"

The A-side is a rockin' toe-tapper, whereas the flip is a bit heavy-handed so I didn't really like it. One hit, one miss. (JC)
(Truxton, no address listed)

listed)



SONNY VINCENT

"Resistor" 7" EP

Joey Ramone says Sonny Vincent is "urgent, raw, and wild." Wow! "Urgent." What does that mean? A 3-song EP of fast and loud in-your-face guitar-shredding punk'n' roll is what you

get from this ex-TESTORS New York rock and roller. If you're into that, than this is for you. (TL)

(NDN/PO Box 131471/The Woodlands, TX 77393)



SORROWS

"Take A Heart" double CD

A digitally-remastered anthology of 42 songs by the SORROWS, a mid-60's British beat group. This reissue includes all their hit

singles, unreleased and delayed-release tracks, foreign language renditions of certain hits, and the entire stereo version of their LP (CD 2). Despite the presence of a couple awful "white soul" tracks and too many inferior versions of the same song, r'n'r addicts should flip over both the heavy Modbeat sides (like "No No No No No" and "You Got What I Want") and the smashing freakbeat blasts (such as "Let Me In" and "Pink, Purple, Yellow, Red"). (JB)
(Sequel/A29 Barwell Business Park/Leatherhead Road/Chessington, Surrey KT9 2NY/ENGLAND)

SOUL BOYS

"Fuck You...We Are The Boys" CD

If this isn't a joke, then it oughta be. The

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clichés these young German punks pull out of their punk rock handbook are of SPINAL TAP proportions. The music is played well, and DSS is a very cool label, but here there ain't a fresh idea to be found. Just think of all the unmemorable background music you heard when you were nearly passed out at a punk show. (SB)
(DSS/PO Box 739/4021 Linz/AUSTRIA)

SOUR JAZZ "No Values" LP/CD

Just in case you've wondered why IGGY hasn't made a good album in years, who cares?. Can any of you remember when IGGY use to rock? Gimme SOUR JAZZ instead! Last month's *Hit List* reintroduced the world to Mr. Ratboy, so it's a shame his SOUR JAZZ release didn't make it into that issue for review. Recommended for NICK CAVE, LOU REED, and IGGY listeners, horns and all! (X)
(Ghostrider/BP 68/75961 Paris, Cedex 20/France)



SPOOKY "Dawn of the Dead" 7" EP

Horror punk is almost always fun when it's done well, as this is. The title track is sort of like Glen Danzig laying down "spooky" lyrics

over a 1/2 speed rewrite of "Ace of Spades". The other three tracks sound too much like the PARASITES to be scary, but they're great pop songs nonetheless. Worth checking out. (BAM)
(Hostage/7826 Seaglen Drive/Huntington Beach, CA 92648)



STEREO "New Tokyo Is Calling" CD EP

I swear Fueled By Ramen must now be a farm label for the majors. This is total commercial "alternative rock". Y'know, THIRD EYE BLIND, that kind of

thing. The production, courtesy of J Robbins, is suitably "big" and clean. If commercial wannabe stadium rock is your thing, I'm sure this is as good as any. I'm sure they pay their stylist a lot of money too. (RK)

(Fueled By Ramen/PO Box 12563/Gainesville, FL 32604)

STEREOPHONIC SPACE SOUND UNLIMITED



"The Space Sound Effect" CD

Instrumental, loungey, surfy, samba-ish, bossanova-y '60s soundtrack music to take big bong hits to. Totally reminiscent of '60s psych exploitation

movies, making it pretty interesting and worth a listen. (TL)

(Dionysus/PO Box 1975/Burbank, CA 91027)



STEREORACERS "Pop Punk Love Melody" 7"

I'm half tempted to fly to Italy, just in the hopes of catching a MANGES/STEREORACERS show. This title is perfect, and the three rockin' songs

on here are damn near perfect too. Check it out. (BAM)

(Perdurabo/Luca Rossi Via Zanoia N 4/28887 Omega/ITALY)

STORY SO FAR "When Fortune Smiled" CD EP

Don't be fooled by the fact that this is the singer from 88 FINGERS LOUIE, as there's none of that melodic hardcore or raging punk. This is much more emo terrain: a full, rocking sound, for sure, but full of stop/starts, riff changes, and tortured vocals. Certainly not wimpy, and if these guys have backpacks they're probably full of heavy machine tools! When they let go, they remind me a little of NAKED RAYGUN. But then there's another riff/tempo change. (RK)

(Hopeless/PO Box 7495/Van Nuys, CA 91409)



STUDDOGS CD

Straight from the "how bad can we be?" school of rock are the STUDDOGS. Let me clarify, I do mean bad as in "bad" and not as in "good". Some songs

are slow, some songs are fast, all of them are lazy. I'm sure they're happy they're getting a bad review, so who knows why they're doing it at all. They must be anarchists with some great plan to be bad. (X)
(Junkboy, no address listed)

SUBSTITUTES EP/CD

It was in a dimly lit DJ booth that I "happened" upon this 3-song CD. From what I

understand, this is a promo from SF's former DOLLS FOR THE MILLIONS. HELLACOPTERS fans take note: the SUBSTITUTES play every riff Ace Frehley was too drunk to write. Guitarwise, they learned from the best and you can hear it all here. A liter of LIZZY, a cup full of COOPER, and a case of classic KISS, shaken not stirred. (X)
(Dolls4\$/1113 Chula Vista Avenue #7/Burlingame, CA 94010)

SUICIDE COMMANDOS "The Commandos Commit Suicide Dance Concert" CD

This CD features a live recording from Jay's Longhorn Club in Minneapolis (November 24, 1978). Great sound quality and way rockin' live performance by this legendary Midwest punk band. They do tons of covers here, like "Shake", "Journey to the Center of the Mind", "My Little Red Book", "Back in the USA", "Born to be Wild," etc. A must for geek punk collectors. (TL)

(Garage D'Or/3015 Lyndale/South Minneapolis, MN 55408)

SUPERFINE DANDELION "Candy Man" CD

This Phoenix group started out playing STONES-influenced garage rockers as the MILE ENDS, then made a rapid transition to countrified psychedelic pop as the SUPERFINE DANDELION. Of the four MILE ENDS tracks here, "Bottle Up and Go", "I Can Never Say", and "Bring 'Em On In" are all appealing. The later material by the DANDELION is in general pretty lightweight and melodic, if not totally mellow, but "The Other Sidewalk", "Ferris Wheel", and the beautiful, exotic "People in the Street" are really fine songs. (JB)
(Sundazed/PO Box 85/Coxsackie, NY 12051)

SWEETHEART "Live For Me" CD EP

Call Mel Chapowitz up, we have some hardcore wussy pop here. It's not really my usual listening fare, but I kinda dig the sparkling guitar work and the melodious female vocals (which at times are a bit reminiscent of a softer Chrissy Hynde). Perfect for the hypoglycemic. (JC)
(Sweetheart/ sweetheart_sf@hotmail.com)



TEEN CRUD COMBO "TCC" 7" EP

Mostly downstroke manic guitars and shouted vocals, similar to ZEKE without the production job or the relentless guitar solos. (Mind you, there are solos, they're just a bit more garage-y) All in

all, this is a pretty cool record. (JC)
(Black Lung/PO Box 976/Morgantown, WV
26507)

TEMPLARS

"Biaus Seignors Freres" CD

What we have here on side one is a collection of various unreleased songs performed by the TEMPLARS in conjunction with a variety of other musicians, namely members of the WEST SIDE BOYS (from France), ASOCIALE (from Italy), and YESTERDAY'S HEROES (from Las Vegas). On side two, there are a bunch of songs taken from the hard to find "OI! This is Dynamite" compilation. Basically, this is more of the same top notch, completely stripped-down, railer skinhead rock that the TEMPLARS are known for. Songs like "Unemployed", "Just Another Rebel", and "Terror Tactics" just continue to blow me away. (JAW)
(TKO/4104 24th Street #103/San Francisco, CA 94114)



TEN BUCK FUCK

"I'm A Creep" 7"

The A-side of this was a huge-sounding SUPERSUCKERS-type rocker that had me dying to flip it over and hear more. What a disappointment that

was, since the B-side contained lame, dragged-out, annoying, pointless crap. It's hard to believe these songs were all done by the same band. Great one-sided single, though. (BAM)
(Radio Blast/GERMANY)



THIRST

"State Of High Piss Off" CD EP/

"Something Beautiful" CD EP

A groovy sort of fuzzed-out indie rock thing that nods toward the psychedelic, poet-

sage scene, punk, and the what-the-fuck college radio crowd. The songs can be light-heartedly intelligent or even anthemic. Pretty interesting overall, and the vocalist doesn't come off like your average wannabe deep, sensitive indie-rock-dude, which is a plus these days. (SB)

(Zip/116 Montgomery Street, suite 200, San Francisco, CA 94105)



TOTIMOSHI

"Totimoshi" CD

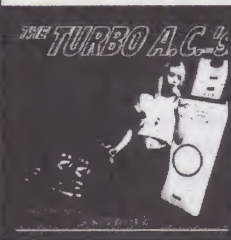
This is heavy sludge rock, dripping with hateful animosity and

years of being totally annoyed with every fucker that makes this city the dotcom capital that it's becoming. It's not metal, it's not punk, it weighs a ton, and they could drink you under the table any fuckin' day. Perhaps they should play on a bill with HIGH ON FIRE, the JESUS LIZARD, and QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE, and I hear they have a real cute drummer, too. (SB)
(no label listed)

TOXIC NARCOTIC/THE UNSEEN

"Boston's Finest" 7" split EP

Most of you punks probably go right out and buy everything on ADD records these days, on account of it all being consistently good, balls-up (and out), pile-driving punk rock like you were raised to love. This is no exception, as both bands rage in the truest tradition. So good, it's like 1982 never ended. (SB)
(ADD-Rodent Popsicle/PO Box 335/Newton Center, MA 02459)



TURBO A.C.S.

"Damnation Overdrive"

The guitar riffing on this album reminded me a lot of BRIAN JAMES' stylings on the first DAMNED album, which must be part of

the reason these guys are so damned popular in Europe. This is the vinyl issue of the bands 1997 CD. Pretty cool tunes that I'm sure get the greaser guys pumping their fists in the air at live shows. (JC)

(Into the Vortex/Fehrteld 26/28203
Bremen/GERMANY)

TUULI

"Rockstar Potential" CD EP

I've been hearing good things about this babelicious Toronto group for some time now, but I remained somewhat skeptical until I heard this 6-song EP. Loud shimmering guitars, angelic baby doll vocals, pop hooks galore, and rockin' mid-tempo beats combine to add up to a real winner here. Their originals are all excellent tunes, especially "Who's The Fool Now?" and "I Won't Lie", and they further display their superior taste by covering a VIBRATORS classic ("Baby, Baby"). (JB)
(Sympathy/4450 California Place #303/Long Beach, CA 90807)

T. VALENTINE

"Hello Lucille, Are You a Lesbian?" CD

This is funny! How demented can you get! Totally deranged '50s R&B soul tunes with a fucked-up singer who's got to be on the pipe or something. Great, hysterical screamers like "Little Lu-Lu Frog," "Teenage

REVIEWS

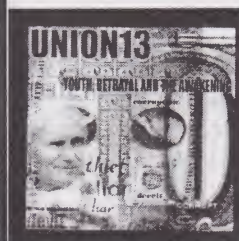
Jump," "Do the Doo," "Black Power I & II" and the best, "Hello Lucille, Are You a Lesbian?" Another great Norton release. Two thumbs up. (TL)

(Norton/Box 646, Cooper Station/New York, NY 10276)

U.K. SUBS

"Diminished Responsibility" CD

The third SUBS studio LP found the band changing its line-up and expanding its musical horizons somewhat. The power and aggression were still there, but the recording left a lot to be desired and the songwriting quality wasn't generally up to their earlier standard. There are some excellent songs (such as "Confrontation", "Time and Matter", and "Violent City") and bonus tracks, but in general this album represented something of a musical trough, wedged as it was between splendid releases like "Brand New Age" and "Endangered Species. (JB)
(Captain Oi/PO Box 501/High Wycombe, Bucks HP10 8QA/ENGLAND)



UNION 13

"Youth, Betrayal and the Awakening" CD

With this, their third full-length, these kids (young adults now?) are really coming into their own. The anger, social and political concerns,

and bi-lingual vocals are all still as up front and in your face as ever, but the sloppy, youthful (?) exuberance has been replaced with a much sharper, focussed, raging hardcore musical assault. Speedy, precise, pissed off, and proud. (RK)
(Epitaph/2798 Sunset Blvd/Los Angeles, CA 90026)

URCHIN

"Fragile Songs In Lukewarm Dreams" CD

I'd heard this band described as a Japanese J-CHURCH, and I guess that's half true since they are Japanese. But this trio debut with a far more ferocious effort much more akin to the "pop-punk" of DILLINGER 4 or early SWINGING UTTERS. They do a PEGBOY cover, and it fits right in. A dynamite release, right up there with the illustrious comparisons. (RK)
(Broken Rekids/PO Box 460892/San Francisco, CA 94146)

VANDALS

"Look What I Almost Stepped In" CD

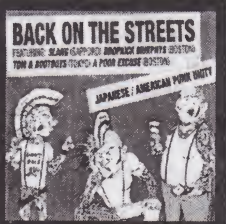
Some of the VANDALS songs helped define the punk era. Without Stevo I didn't think they

SHITLIST



could still pull off sounding like they're not selling out and just hanging on to a time gone by. That goes to show you what a faithless bitch I am, because they're still fierce, witty as hell, and

have their collective middle finger firmly implanted in the Establishment's ass. (SB) (Nitro/7071 Warner Avenue, suite #f-736/Huntington Beach, CA 92647)



VARIOUS ARTISTS "Back on the Streets" 10" EP

A Japanese-American streetpunk collaboration. SLANG (Japan) play really quick, super aggro hardcore. The

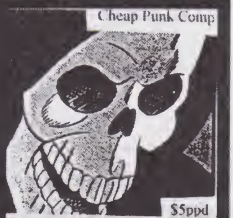
DROPKICK MURPHYS cover a MISFITS song and play one original. The best band on this compilation are TOM & THE BOOT BOYS (Japan), who play totally snotty pogo punk. A POOR EXCUSE (US) play tuff hardcore. If you are into hardcore this just might give you a boner, but if not look for those TOM & THE BOOTBOYS singles. (JAW) (TKO/4104 24th Street #103/San Francisco, CA 94114)



VARIOUS ARTISTS "Better Living Through Reckless Experimentation" CD

Great cover-art, but really, I am at a loss as to what exactly the point of such compilations is. All previously released tracks (except one from BRACKET) from (admittedly largely fine) labels like Honest Don's, Fat, Coldfront, Fearless and Hopeless. If you like that pop-punk/melodic hardcore sound, and staggeringly, have never heard the likes of DOWN BY LAW, HAGFISH, DIVIT, DIESEL BOY, LIMP, D.B.S., FURY 66, CONSUMED, DYNAMITE BOY, etc., then I guess this would be a fine introduction to a whole musical world. (RK)

(Barcode/1665 Second Street/Val Caron, Ontario P3N 1K1/CANADA)



VARIOUS ARTISTS "Cheap Punk Comp"

CD

Just for the record, there are cool cartoons that can be misappropriated for nostalgic artistic purposes. iMasters of the Universe" is not one of them. Anyway, mostly no-name bands here with one or two exceptions (the CONNIE DUNGS and OPERATION: CLIFF CLAVIN). Not a bad comp altogether, as long as you factor out the atrocious packaging, and there's an awesome song from the BANANAS ending the disc. (JER)

(Escape Pod/PO Box 1462/Grapevine, TX 76099)



VARIOUS ARTISTS "Dr. Wu Compilation, Vol. 2-000" CD

The majority of good stuff happens deliberately on the front half of this sooo LA rock comp. The CD opens with the

NEWLYDEADS' "In Denial", which I feel finally represents Taime's keen sense of hook. Highlights include the HANGMEN's remake of "Russian Roulette" by the LORDS, and MOTOCHRIST's "We Came, We Saw, We Drank." Other notable participants include LOBALL and the STREET WALKIN' CHEETAHS (who get around so much that I now cut and paste their name:). (X)

(Dr. Wu/1629 Landa Street/Los Angeles, CA 90026)



VARIOUS ARTISTS "Killed By Crackle" CD

Now this is more like it. The British counterpart to Mutant Pop turns in a killer sampler of the underground pop-punk scene in England. There are a couple of U.S.

bands like DILLENGER 4 and SICKO (I'm assuming that Crackle licensed the releases), but the lion's share are Limeys like CROCODILE GOD and the always awesome SKIMMER. I was a little disappointed at the exclusion of TRAVIS, but this CD is still the best thing I got this issue. I just wish their releases were easier to find stateside. (JER) (Crackle/PO Box 7/Otley LS21 1YB/ENGLAND)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"My Girlfriend was a Punk!" LP

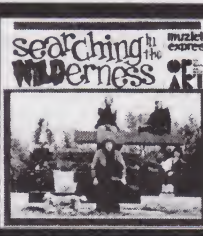
It's hard to go wrong with this collection of "Rare Early Female Punkrockers" from the 77-82 era, although some of these groups boasted only one woman. The LP contains a mixture of classic punkers and semi-New Wave cuts, both by well-liked bands (such as SADO-NATION, the ELECTRIC DEADS, USCH, and MARY MONDAY) and by much more obscure

outfits like the QUESTIONS and ANOUSCHKA & LES PRIVES (France), TYRANNA (Canada), and S.I.B. (Italy), all of whom really impressed me. But LAS VULPESS's unequalled PISTOLian 45 is sorely missed. (JB) (no label listed)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Quarters, vol. 1" 7"

First of all, this has SMALL BROWN BIKE on it, so just go buy it. Fans of HOT WATER MUSIC, and just plain good music, should pay attention to that. Personally, I wasn't much into KELETON D.M.D., QUIXOTE, or LOVESICK, but since you're going to buy it for S.B.B. anyway, you can make your own call. (BAM) (Atarms/PO Box 27/Marshall, MI 49068)



VARIOUS ARTISTS "Searching for the WILderness" LP/CD

One of the best of the recent comps of 60's beat music, one which focuses almost exclusively on garagey "punk beat" and R&B

from Europe. Along with a couple of lame throwaway cover songs, one is bombarded with a host of rave-up stompers from the likes of Sweden's NAMELOSERS; Holland's OUTSIDERS, Q65, and GOLDEN EARRINGS; Canada's "A PASSING FANCY; and Britain's RED SQUARES and ALAN POUND'S GET RICH, among others. Lots of these tracks have already been comped, but it's nice to have so many gems gathered together on one release. (JB)

(Muziek Express, no address listed)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"The Story of Oak Records, 1964-1968" CD

Oak was an amazing independent label begun by R.G. Jones, a pioneer of modern recording techniques whose Surrey studio had at first specialized in producing vinyl demos (for, among others, the STONES). The label was not only distinguished by Jones' innovative aural approach, but also by its willingness to put out a series of smashing, limited edition records by some of the better bands of the day. After recording and releasing material by some derivative R'n'B outfits, Oak began showcasing superior moody beat (the JAGUARS, the EXILES), Modbeat (the A-JAES, the GREMLINS), freakbeat (PETE MILLER, the FOUR LEAVED CLOVERS, the KINGPINS, the GAME), and psychedelia (MIKE STUART SPAN, LAVENDER GROVE). (JB)

(Wooden Hill/13 Barricane/St. Johns, Woking/Surrey QU21 1RB/ENGLAND)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"100% Apehit Rock: Estrus Sampler, vol. 2"

I have a long-running love affair with this label, which has one of the best track records of any of the well-established indies. They consistently unearth pure rockin' bands in our hip-hop/N'SYNC world, and some of their releases just plain give me chills. A few of the many highlights of this 24-track sampler include the BOBBYTEENS, the DRAGS, FATAL FLYING GUILLOTEENS, the LORD HIGH FIXERS, MOONEY SUZUKI, the SEWERGROOVES, the SOLEDAD BROTHERS, and hell, pretty much everything else on it. (JC)
(Estrus/PO Box 2125/Bellingham, WA 98227)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

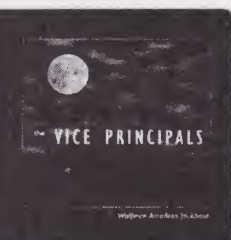
"Vulture Rock Promotional EP #4" 7" EP

This is an excellent sampling of the best old school style, genuine, boot-in-yer-face punk rock that's happening today. Vulture Rock is a solid label, and this features damn decent cuts from all their bands, including the TEMPLARS, DISORDERLY CONDUCT, and the YOUTHFUL OFFENDERS. (SB)
(Vulture Rock/PO Box 40104/Albuquerque, NM. 87196)

VICTORY FLAG

"Demo 2000" CD EP

A 4-track demo, I'm guessing. As you can probably imagine from the name, this is fairly generic - though well played - tough guy, muscular, hardcore, complete with stop/starts, breakdowns (and beatdowns!?), and mosh parts. (RK)
(Victory Flag/PO Box 25305/Cleveland, OH 44125)



VICE PRINCIPALS

"Wolfman Amadeus Jackboot" 7"

Scott Drake, singer of the now defunct HUMBERS, his old guitarist, his brother, and a couple other LA scenesters get

together here with a new band. This, their debut effort, offers up a couple of mid- to slow-tempo garage feeling numbers that aren't exactly overflowing with hooks. I'm excited about the band, but will wait to hear more before making my final decision. (BAM)
(Junk/7071 Warner Ave F PMB 736/Huntington Beach, CA 92647)

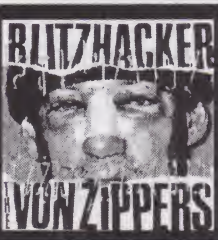


VICE SQUAD

"The Very Best of..." CD

This female-fronted Britpunk band is still fondly remembered, and this CD collects

many of their best-known songs from the 1978-85 era. One problem they faced was that arguably their finest song, "Last Rocker", appeared on their debut 7" EP, making everything that succeeded it sound somewhat pale by comparison. Despite the presence of a number of other memorable mid-tempo punkers, including "Young Blood", "Freedom Begins at Home", "Black Sheep", and "New Blood", much of the material here fails to make a strong impression. (JB)
(Anagram)

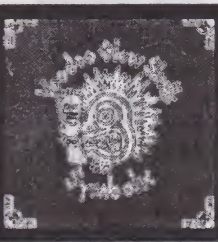


VON ZIPPERS

"Blitzhacker" CD

THEE HEADCOATS-meet-the PACK style garage punk. This band puts on a pretty great live show, and their CD is packed full of dirty, crunchy, hooky

rock'n'roll tunes. My faves are "Hey Hey Baby," "Monkey on You," and "Proto Sicko." But - ha! - it's not as good as the BOBBYTEENS' release on Estrus. (TL)
(Estrus/PO Box 2125/Bellingham, WA 98227)



VODOO GLOW SKULLS

"Symbolic" CD

For a band that claims to be "punk with horns" and who mock sak on their opening track, there sure is a lot of ska, reggae and

rocksteady on this record. They do it well if one is enamoured with the more upbeat, aggressive, muscular end of the genre, and as always the playing and production is impressively seamless. For real punk as fuck with horns, stick to AGAINST ALL AUTHORITY. (RK)
(Epitaph/2798 Sunset Blvd/Los Angeles, CA 90026)

WAYOUTS

"Cheap Merlot & Luckies" 7"

This is some of the worst "indie", college rock horseshit I have heard in a while. La-la-la-di-da, alterna-crap pop shit. Besides being lousy, this isn't my thing at all. (JAW)
(Harmless, no address listed)



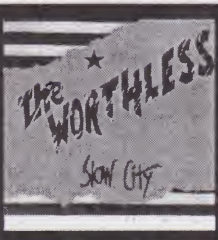
WINCHESTER 73

"Arizona Terror" 7"

Six songs of pub-influenced German punk'n'roll performed by ex-members of Bonn band IMPACT, if that means anything to you.

REVIEWS

Big guitars, and not a word to be understood (even though it's all sung in English). I like! (BAM)
(Weird Science/Vorgebirgsstrasse Be 78/53119 Bonn/GERMANY)



WORTHLESS

"Slow City" CD

This is pretty snotty punk rock with a definite SoCal, vaguely beach sound. These guys have some pretty catchy songs, but kinda sound like a third rate

SMOGTOWN. There is some good guitar work here, especially when playing the JOHNNY THUNDERS-esque, syrupy leads, like in "Booster". (JAW)
(Taang/706 Pismo Court/San Diego, CA 92109)

WRETCHED ONES

"The First Song" LP

I'm not exactly sure why I have this vinyl reissue of the very first WRETCHED ONES LP in my pile, but I'm complaining because, to be brutally honest, I FUCKING LOVE THIS BAND. Suffice it to say that if you don't already have this classic blue collar punk record from New Jersey's finest, you'd better rush right out and get it. (JAW)
(Knock Out/Postfach 100716/46527 Dinslaken/GERMANY)

WRETCHED ONES

"We Don't Belong To Nobody" LP

The newest WRETCHED ONES record, "We Don't Belong To Nobody" is filled with more of the same awesome, hard-as-nails, streetpunk rock that we all know and love by these East Coast darlings. More songs about drinking, working, and more drinking and working. This is a great third effort, though not as absolutely railer as their first two. Songs like "Welcome To The East Coast" make this record all the better, and I really wish that someone would fly these fuckers out here to play. (JAW)
(Knock Out/Postfach 100716/46527 Dinslaken/GERMANY)

YOUNG HASSELHOFS

"Get Dumped" CD

Even though this isn't on Mutant Pop, this is what comes to mind when I think of the "Mutant Pop Sound." Strong pop punk with a hefty dose of GREEN DAY (especially in the vocal department) and all the prerequisite broken heart lyrics. Awesome. (JER)
(Reinforcement/no address listed)

BOOK

Black Mass: The Irish Mob, the FBI and A Devil's Deal

by Dick Lehr and Gerard O'Neill (New York: Public Affairs, 2000)

The '90's were not kind to the FBI. After unintentionally gunning down the wife and child of a white supremacist, incinerating dozens of religious fanatics, and inadvertently allowing its agents to act as dirt-digging lackeys for the first family, the once-venerated agency began to encounter severe image problems. Distrust of the FBI ran deep and created strange bedfellows; in a rare moment of ideological consensus, Republican Congressmen and *Maximum Rock'n'Roll* columnists alike were calling for a full-scale investigation of the embattled agency. In *Black Mass*, Dick Lehr and Gerard O'Neill, two investigative reporters for the *Boston Globe*, chronicle the FBI's final public relations nightmare of the decade. It is the story of how, for twenty years, the FBI shielded two informants from prosecution while they committed multiple murders and made millions of dollars from bookmaking, loan-sharking, and drug dealing.

The story begins in 1975, when Special Agent John Connolly of the Boston office of the FBI convinced James "Whitey" Bulger and Stevie "The Rifleman" Flemmi, two mid-level lieutenants in South Boston's predominantly-Irish Winter Hill gang, to become informants. It was a major coup for the young agent; the FBI was on a mission to destroy the Italian Mafia and Bulger and Flemmi, by virtue of their underworld connections, were in a position to help.

With the aid of information supplied by numerous informants, including Bulger and Flemmi, the FBI was able to obtain court approval to bug the offices of Gennaro Angiulo, the underboss of the local Italian Mafia. The resulting tapes led to convictions which decimated the Boston branch of La Cosa Nostra. However, as the public would eventually learn, these convictions came at a high price. With Angiulo and his thick-necked cronies finishing out the millennium in various federal penitentiaries, there was a void in the criminal underworld that Bulger and Flemmi were only too eager to fill. They began strong-arming bookmakers and loan sharks into paying them a percentage of every transaction. Soon, they expanded into the drug trade. By the end of the 1980's, South Boston was awash in a sea of

cocaine, and the dealers were paying Bulger and Flemmi for the right to do business in the neighborhood.

Bulger and Flemmi's rapid ascent in the criminal underworld did not go unnoticed by the local law enforcement agencies. Lehr and O'Neill document how, through a variety of tactics that included tipping off Bulger and Flemmi, intimidating witnesses and misfiling documents, Agent Connolly managed to stymie numerous investigations into the activities of the two gangsters. Like John Gotti and Al Capone before them, Bulger and Flemmi came to be regarded as criminal geniuses who were forever outwitting the feeble-minded authorities. Few suspected that the fix was in.

Black Mass is the culmination of more than 12 years of investigation by O'Neill



and Lehr. During that time, they conducted more than 180 interviews with members of law enforcement, residents of South Boston, and criminals. These interviews, coupled with pre-trial testimony of witnesses and judicial findings of fact in the federal racketeering case against Bulger and Flemmi, form the factual basis for this book.

The story is presented in a fairly straight, reportorial fashion. It is a style that works well because the facts are so compelling. The reader cannot help but be repulsed by Connolly. He comes across as a self-aggrandizing renegade determined to bring glory to himself by bringing down the Italian Mafia. His amorality was infectious – within a few months of becoming Connolly's supervisor, straight-arrow agent John Morris was attending lavish dinner parties and exchanging expensive gifts with Bulger, Flemmi and Connolly. At one of these get-togethers, Morris told Bulger and Flemmi that they could do whatever they pleased without being prosecuted as long

as they did not "clip anyone."

This simple rule proved too much for Bulger and Flemmi. By the late 1980's, the bodies of their enemies were piling up at an alarming rate. O'Neill and Lehr present a great deal of evidence to suggest that Connolly tacitly approved several of these murders. Still, Connolly was only delaying the inevitable. In 1995, Bulger and Flemmi were finally indicted on long overdue charges of racketeering.

In addition to chronicling in minute detail the rise and fall of Bulger and Flemmi, O'Neill and Lehr shed light on the complex set of circumstances that gave rise to the relationship between Connolly and the two gangsters. Until J. Edgar Hoover's death in 1972, the FBI had devoted almost all of its resources to ferreting out and prosecuting Communists and other subversives in this country. As a result, the Mafia had flourished. Movies like "The Godfather" fueled fears that this country was being overrun by Italian gangsters. By the mid-70's, the public was demanding that something be done. Connolly accepted the mandate. As an ambitious young agent, Connolly's best chance for quick advancement within the FBI was by recruiting informants. Connolly's recruitment of big-time gangsters like Bulger and Flemmi earned him the admiration of his fellow agents and praise from his superiors. Thus, he had a marked interest in keeping Bulger and Flemmi as active informants for as long as possible even though, as Lehr and O'Neill contend, Bulger and Flemmi actually provided very little valuable information to the FBI. Further, Connolly and Bulger were both from the insular Irish neighborhood of South Boston. As a child, Connolly had idolized Bulger. Lehr and O'Neill make a fairly compelling argument that Connolly's desire to be liked by Bulger drove him to shield Bulger and Flemmi from prosecution.

Black Mass is, essentially, a true crime book. It is not a macro-level examination of FBI tactics. It is not an indictment of the FBI as a whole. It is merely an in-depth examination of the Bulger affair. As such, it is both informative and highly entertaining. Still, upon reading *Black Mass*, one cannot help but consider the question that defense lawyers have been asking for years: should the government give special treatment to one criminal in order to convict another?

Review by J. Hunter Bennett

SCUM Manifesto

by Valerie Solanas (San Francisco: AK Press, 199?)

Disliking Andy Warhol as much as I do, I was reluctant to take on a review of the *SCUM Manifesto*. That's right, I dislike Andy so very much that I didn't even want to have anything to do with the person who shot him. Brett said please, and I said O.K., so here it is. Not caring about the history of the thing, or of Valerie Solanas herself (other than what was provided by the introduction) I had a very hard time imagining that she had meant for anyone to take the *SCUM Manifesto* as anything other than parody. But apparently, she was "the first outstanding champion of woman's rights" according to Ti-Grace Atkinson, the then president of the N.Y. chapter of NOW. If this writing is indicative of what it takes to be such a person, than Lorena Bobbit should have been canonized. SCUM stands for the Society for Cutting Up Men, and it's goals are stated quite succinctly in its title. Men should be cut up and eliminated from the gene pool. Now, exactly how this is to be accomplished is a bit vague and quite sci-fi, but Solanas insists that the male is a genetic fluke that can easily be done away with.

SCUM will kill all men who are not in the Men's Auxiliary of SCUM. Men in the Men's Auxiliary are those men who are working diligently to eliminate themselves, men who, regardless of their motives, do good, men in the Auxiliary are: men who kill men!

In addition to the general man-killing that will ensue under a SCUM-based leadership, all work will in turn be eliminated, and all goods and services will be free. Supposedly, women are just much better at communal living than men. It will be a man-free paradise! Of course, to accomplish this, there will have to be a lot of murders, and that includes the elimination of women who like men. So girls, if you're going steady, hooked up, or god forbid, married, renounce it all or be the first against the wall along with that "lowly, abject turd" you happen to be with. Muddled ideas for world domination aside, the *SCUM Manifesto* contains some truly great lines that I found no end of amusement quoting to my housemate. Here are some of the best:

"Males, like the rats following the Pied Piper, will be lured by pussy to their doom.."

"A few examples of the most obnoxious or harmful types (of men) are: rapists,

politicians- lousy singers- owners of greasy spoons and restaurants that play musak.."

"Eventually the natural course of events, of social evolution, will lead to total female control of the world and, subsequently, to the cessation of the production of males and, ultimately, to the cessation of the production of females."

Yes, you read that last one correctly. "the cessation of the production of females" is a SCUM goal as well. Why they don't just pass out cyanide pills to the entire population is beyond me. Seems cheaper and quicker. But then, we wouldn't get to read this amazing pile of crap and laugh our asses off in the process. At six bucks for 50 some odd pages, it'd be worth the good feeling you get as you place this little number beside your copy of the Unabomber's manifesto. Be sure to have it



ready for your next "Ideologies That Never Took Off" party.

Reviewed by Lee Gorton

Let It Bloat

***Let It Blur: The Life & Times of Lester Bangs* by Jim DeRogatis. Broadway Books, 332 pages, \$15.95**

***A Whore Just Like the Rest* by Richard Meltzer. Da Capo Press, 591 pages, \$17**

***The Nick Tosches Reader* by (duh) Nick Tosches. Da Capo Press, 593 pages, \$18.95**

These three books, one about the late Lester Bangs and the other two containing righteous blurbs of the writings of Richard Meltzer and Nick Tosches, can be seen as jolts of electricity jumper-cabled into the cadaver of rock and roll. They can also be

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seen as musings on mortality and music, but more about the latter later.

Bangs, Meltzer and Tosches were known - at first bombastically but later derisively - as the "Noise Boys of Rock Criticism," a nickname affixed to them by James Wolcott which they alternately tried to live up to and live down. Bangs died trying to do the former; Meltzer and Tosches became cranky freelancers but have never really succeeded in accomplishing the latter. In fact, they both seem to think rock and roll was invented by and for them and that, because it has since stopped being of any interest to them, it should fold up its tent and move along. Which explains, in part, their crankiness.

Meltzer is a particularly maddening case, because he is still capable of being as original and provocative as any writer alive. He has also lived rock and roll from the inside, having written lyrics for several Blue Oyster Cult songs (and was even responsible for the umlaut over the "O" in Oyster), fronted the L.A. protopunk band Vom, now fronts a Portland band called Smegma, and has dedicated *A Whore Just Like the Rest* to Claude Bessy, who he calls "the roaring, flaming son of some godless god" and "the greatest rockwriter you never heard of." There are flashes of brilliance in his new collection, particularly his stuff for the *L.A. Reader* and *San Diego Reader*, which includes the best piece ever written on MTV ("Merde, Turd, Vomit"), the music biz ("Another Grammy Year with the Meltzer Clan"), and the Boss ("One Commie Wrong About Bruce"). Tosches, despite his success (his latest book, about Sonny Liston, hit the bestseller list), always seemed more of a respectable journeyman to me than a unique wordsmith. Nothing wrong with that, of course, but Tosches seems to want it both ways, as a rock and roll (oops, 'n' roll) hero and yet also a chronicler of Las Vegas sleaze, the Mafia, Sinatra, Sammy and Dean Martin - the very antitheses of rock and (or 'n') roll.

However, no discussion of the Noise Boys would be complete without a mention of Robert Christgau, about whom all three seem to share the same opinion. Christgau was an occasional editor of all three and has been ensconced for the last several generations at the *Village Voice*. Christgau is, as he'd no doubt like to think, famed throughout the insular rock criticism world for using a grading system for the albums he reviews (mostly B+ through D-, but if

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it's a rap gangstuh joint or a "world music" platter it almost always gets an A + + + +, no questions asked). For better or worse, Christgau is the Roger Ebert of rock and roll. Greil Marcus, with whom Christgau shares both academic pretense and humorlessness, is the Ezra Pound of rock and roll, unreadable but nonetheless worshipped by grad students.

These books share many things, but the one thing about which they agree is how much all three Noise Boys loathed Christgau. He was not only the butt of many of their jokes and pranks, but he regularly proved by word and deed that he merited their contempt. Thus, it is instructive to learn that Christgau is hopping mad about how he's been portrayed by DeRogatis (via Bangs' legend) and Meltzer. Here are some snippets from Christgau's recent *Voïce* review of these same three books, which ran under the headline "Impolite Discourse: The Noise Boys Ride Again":

"Fuck yes I have a personal interest in the books that follow. Not just because all involve rock criticism and I am Der Dean...but because in two of the three I am explicitly and persistently attacked." And: "Listen up, Jim DeRogatis. When I threw that piece of pie (not my 'dinner,' the food line was long) at Ellen Willis, it wasn't because, as Willis with her Handy Dandy Theory Generator lets you suggest, I wanted to maintain the sexist status quo of 'gender relations in rock-critic land.' The motives I experienced were no more noble but a lot more personal, and to find out what they were (and then assay their credibility) you need merely to have asked." O.K., enough.

If all of this seems a bit pathetic, or bathetic, in the year 2000, that's entirely the point. The confluence of all this tired testosterone and antique egomania (DeRogatis included) is enough to drive home the point to anyone who is still holding up a Bic Lighter in the hope that Garcia, Danko, or Crosby, Stills and Young will play another encore, that rock and roll—that Moby Dick enshrined in Cleveland and now, peripherally, in Paul Allen's acidic ego trip in Seattle—is as dead as King Tut, Peking Man, and Sun Ra. Tell us something we don't know, right?

Nonetheless, Lester Bangs (1949-1982) is worth remembering, and much of Richard Meltzer is worth rereading, as is some of Tosches. For the longest time, it was assumed by people who have nothing

better to occupy their craniums with that Meltzer and Tosches were the real geniuses of the rockcrit sanctum. They both had an undeniable propulsive energy going for them, making whatever they had to write seem more like a rollercoaster ride than a rock and roll review. But, if truth be told, much of Tosches' rock writing doesn't hold up as well as his stuff on jazz, and the same can be said for a smaller portion of Meltzer's. The reason is pretty simple: they both hated music, or rather, they both hated rock and roll after, say, 1969. And yet they continued to write about it for the next eleventy-million years.

After reading his anthology of "music writings" (many of which I'd read and enjoyed in their original form in *Crawdaddy*, *Creem*, *Fusion*, and the *L.A. Reader*), I have not altered my view of Meltzer's talent. But, juxtaposed with a



reading of DeRogatis's crisp biography of Bangs and a rereading of Bangs' posthumous *Psychotic Reactions and Carburetor Dung*, I am now of the mind that Bangs was The Man. I would never suggest that his death in 1982 was a good thing; but I will say I'm glad he's not around to pitch more gobs of useless bile upon the latest mountainous spat thrown out by these other greying critics. In fact, Bangs looks like something of a genius, in hindsight, for taking himself out of the game in the middle innings.

Bangs, like Meltzer (who still lives, uncompromisingly but vice-free, on the edge of poverty), was a one of a kind writer. That, more than his thirst for Romilar cough syrup and Labatt's beer, may have hastened his departure from this world. His 33 years of life cut a swath through the countercultural landscape, from the Beats to the punks, and his writing career, all 15 years of it, perfectly coincided with a time when rock and roll

mattered more than anything else in the world.

Here's Lester, at age 22, on this topic: "the time has come for all good men and women to come to the aid of the Party; i.e., DECIDE whether you wanta jump and caper with music that's alive or moulder in the Dostoyevskian hovels of dead bardic auteur crap picking nits out of its navel." Here he is at the end: "I invented punk. Everybody knows that. But I stole it from Greg Shaw...and he stole it from Dave Marsh...But he stole it from John Sinclair. Who stole it from Rob Tyner. Who stole it from Iggy. Who stole it from Lou Reed. Who stole it from Gene Vincent. Who stole it from James Dean. Who stole it from Marlin Brando. Who stole it from Robert Mitchum. And he stole it from Humphrey Bogart. Who stole it from James Cagney. Who stole it from Pretty Boy Floyd. Who stole it from Harry Crosby. Who stole it from Teddy Roosevelt. Who stole it from Billy the Kid. Who stole it from Mike Fink. Who stole it from Stonewall Jackson. Who stole it from Napoleon. Who stole it from Voltaire..."

By profession, Bangs was a rock critic, "America's Greatest," according to DeRogatis' subtitle. But by inclination he was a performer and, at times, a clown. And though by temperament he was a hopeless romantic, circumstances had reduced him to self-parody by the end of his life. He seemed to take it personally that rock and roll did not save the world, that it instead became a commodity, one more prop to the corrupt celebrity culture we wallow in today.

Nonetheless, there's probably not a pop culture writer within five years of Bangs' age who wasn't influenced by him. As the "music critic" for my campus paper when Bangs hit his stride with the Detroit-based *Creem*, "America's Only Rock N Roll Magazine," I read, and reread, everything he wrote, wherever it appeared. Bangs was amazingly prolific for a guy who, as *Let It Blurt* poignantly reveals, was at perpetual loose ends or wallowing at the bottom of a barrel of Romilar. Bangs also wrote for *Rolling Stone*, the *Village Voice*, *Fusion*, *Real Paper*, *New Musical Express*, *Hit Parader*, *Trouser Press*, and *New York Rocker*. (My hunch is that, were he alive, he'd be contributing to *Hit List* and *Flipside*, too).

On one of those rare impulses that proves correct, I wrote Bangs a fan letter back then, disguised as a request for advice, and he wrote me back a long, encouraging letter, which I still keep alongside a similar letter I got from Allen

Ginsberg around the same time. Just as it's hard for me to imagine poetry without Ginsberg or sports without Muhammad Ali, it's impossible to imagine pop writing without Lester Bangs. His writings were, at the risk of sounding hagiographic, like letters to rock fans, a perpetual passing of the torch. DeRogatis's book, one of the best rock and roll books in recent memory (up there with John Cale's *What's Welsh for Zen*), details how Bangs' religious-like calling came naturally to him. After his ex-con father died at 41 in a fire (passed out drunk with a lit cigarette), Bangs was put in nearly solitary confinement by his mother, a devoted Jehovah's Witness. He paraded from door to door with her, proselytizing for the Kingdom Hall, distributing *Awake* magazine and living with the idea of an impending apocalypse, exactly as depicted in the Bible, an image he never fully discarded.

This was not a healthy foundation for an impressionable suburban San Diego lad. A miserable student, he was a tireless autodidact, and it was evident to a few of his teachers with foresight - who cut him slack - that he was possessed of something like genius. One of the more fascinating parts of *Let It Blurt* is the description of his formative years. Though it may surprise his fans, Bangs' first love was not rock and roll. He and his pals fancied themselves heirs to the Beats. They modeled their writing on Kerouac and Burroughs and stoked their creative juices with bebop jazz. Bangs' two biggest heroes were Charles Mingus and John Coltrane; with the exception of Lou Reed he never found figures of such stature in rock and roll. Bangs never bought the peace and love ethic of the hippies and steered clear of that whole scene; like some kind of prophet, he sensed the end of that scene at the Stones' concert at Altamont, which he attended.

Bangs' last years, beginning with his 1977 arrival in New York during the punk explosion and ending with his death in 1982, were a predictable slide into increasingly appalling behavior, as his ego and body tried desperately to keep pace with his legend. Toward the end, he made a noble attempt to right himself, going to AA and turning to longer projects more worthy of his prodigious talent. But his dark side, the seed of which may have been planted in the fire that killed his self-destructive father, prevailed. His death, though marginally mysterious (the autopsy was bungled), was probably attributable to an overdose of Darvon, valium, and Romilar. Alas, he only published two books

in his lifetime, slim bios of Rod Stewart and Blondie. The book he'd have loved to see published, *Psychotic Reactions and Carburetor Dung*, was finally published in 1987. It has not been out of print since.

DeRogatis, rightfully, takes to task humorless pedants like Marcus and Marsh (Bangs' colleagues at *Rolling Stone* and *Creem*, respectively) and, of course, Christgau Der Dean. There are some priceless descriptions of, and anecdotes about, Christgau's notorious pomposity ("I was the best editor he ever had..."). But a little of this incestuous bickering among antique critics goes a long way; if the book has any failing, it's the sense that DeRogatis is settling some of his own scores along with those of Bangs. To his larger credit, however, he neither sanctifies Lester Bangs nor wallows in his excesses. Instead, he offers an unflinching



portrait of a great American writer, without sentimentality or cruelty. Lester couldn't have asked for more.

Reviews by Alan Bisbort

Alan Bisbort is the author, with Parke Puterbaugh, of *Groovy, Man: A Trip Through the Psychedelic Years* (Los Angeles: Rhino, 2000).

Pamela Des Barres, *I'm With The Band: Confessions of a Groupie*. New York: William Morrow, 1987.

I wish I were important enough that people would send me advance copies of their books so that I could mull them over, formulate witty and insightful comments about them, and then publish reviews so that you all could benefit from my intellectual prowess.

Alas, nobody with book-sending power gives a shit what my opinion is, so I am relegated to culling examples of interesting literature from my own shelves. This is not necessarily a bad thing. In fact, there is a pretty good assortment of out-of-print texts among my collection; monographs and thrillers the world has cruelly left behind.

The one I wish to discuss with you today is the rock and roll tell-all *I'm With The Band* by Pamela Des Barres, perhaps one of the most famous groupies in the world. *I'm With The Band* is, perhaps mind-bogglingly, out of print. Why a publisher wouldn't keep this one on the shelves is entirely beyond me, particularly in these days of print-on-demand technology which allows publishers to make titles available without having to actually stock inventory or deal with a distributor. I had been jonesing for a good groupie tale, so I went in search of a copy, easily found one for a decent price on eBay, and tore into it the day it arrived.

I have a twisted fascination with sluts of any and all kinds. There's something about sexual promiscuity that piques my curiosity. Much like watching a car crash, I am both attracted to and repulsed by the sexually licentious. Promiscuity, on one's own terms, can be a form of empowerment and a challenge to societal gender norms. But it can also be a horrowshow of neuroses and disease. Perhaps I enjoy the attraction/repulsion of it because it forces me to acknowledge my own prejudices about sexual normalcy. I'm sure a couple of years on an analyst's couch would straighten all of this out for me, but that is neither here nor there. Regardless, I was really hoping that *I'm With The Band* would be the unabashed journey into libertinism that would feed my need for vicarious slutdom.

So I snuggled down with the book and prepared to become all hot and bothered from my little foray into biographical voyeurism. The experience, however, was entirely dry. Her stories were interesting, and yes, it is kind of thrilling to hear about fucking rock stars, but for a slut's tale, it could not have been less slutty. I would have enjoyed the book so much more if Pamela had put aside all of the pre-teen passages about longing for true love and Prince Charming and just gotten down to business.

Pamela is no great auteur. Let me just get that part out of the way right now. Using both reminiscence and choice

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selections from her private journals, which read as though they were written for an audience, we see her evolve from an innocent pre-teen, to a sexually aware flower child, to a woman who struggles to find a balance between her role as a girlfriend and her desire for a career and fame in her own right.

The prose is frequently heavy-handed, and I found the journal entries which dotted the chapters to be overly-sentimental and often downright unbelievable. They may very well have been written when she was in her tender years, but I really didn't *believe* that they had been. And there's nothing sadder than an unconvincing journal! Despite the sentimentality, there is a lot about this book that your average girl rock-fan can relate to: the crushes, the boyfriend who turned you on to rock in the first place, the bad girl thrill of going to concerts and discovering your sexuality along with the music.

She begins the book as a gum-snapping die-hard Beatles fan, languishing under lascivious dreams about Paul and his "milky white thighs" in her suburban California bedroom. Who the hell has ever thought about a man's milky white thighs? That's what I want to know! We all know she was really checking out the package - why couldn't she just admit it? But no, she had fantasies about reciting poetry while wrapped in his arms, and fairy-tale getaways to deserted islands. Maybe it's true that 14 year olds were a lot younger back then...but I don't buy it. Anyway, through an outlaw friend, she is exposed to the Rolling Stones and Captain Beefheart. The chasm between her and her Beatlemania pod of friends becomes too deep, and Pam fully abandons herself to the L.A. rock scene.

As her passion for the music grows, so does her passion for the musicians. At one point she writes: "I showed my affection for the opposite sex in those days by giving them head...I just wanted to show my appreciation for their music, for their taste in clothes, for their heads, hands, and hearts." Now *that* is dedication! From that point on, the all-star parade through her bedroom takes on epic proportions: Noel Redding (Jimi Hendrix Experience), Jimmy Page (Led Zeppelin), Captain Beefheart (although she only gave him a handjob, which was described in annoyingly obscure language), Chris Hillman (the Byrds and Flying Burrito Brothers), Don Johnson

(Miami Vice), Keith Moon (the Who), and Mick Jagger (Rolling Stones).

It wasn't all sex, drugs and rock and roll. Pam was quite close with the Zappas, Gram Parsons, Rodney (on the ROQ) Bingenheimer, and was also busy trying to build her own career as a star through both the GTOs and as a "B" movie actress. Yet it becomes apparent that her relationships with rock-stars formed the centerpoint of her existence, and we sadly watch her bounce from one guy to the next, desperately hoping each time that this one will be the love ever-lasting.

But *I'm With The Band* begs the fundamental question - "what is the point of being a groupie?" - without adequately answering it. Pam was a groupie at a point in time when rock stars were culturally



significant personae, and female rock stars were very few and far between. To be a groupie was one of the only ways that a woman could participate (meaningfully?) in the rock and roll power structure. There's a great passage in John Lydon's autobiography, *Rotten: No Blacks, No Irish, No Dogs*, where he recounts how a famous American groupie came backstage after one of his shows and exclaimed that she simply *had* to add him to her list of conquests. He told her, in typical Rotten fashion, to slag off. The level of success and fame one could attain as a groupie was directly correlated to THE LIST. And what's the point of generating THE LIST if you're not going to revel in it, compare it to others', and ultimately publicize it?

This book was supposed to be a sordid "tell all" about important rock and roll icons. It was supposed to be a peek into the fast and dangerous world that most of us don't have the guts or libido to inhabit. Pam was supposed to regale us, make us

green with envy, shock us, titillate us. I thought she was going to fuck her way to the top so as to be able to look down and laugh at conventional morality. But, rather than emerging from the pages as a ball-busting sexual conquistadora, she devolved into a plain old wife and mother who settled for a second rate musician.

In the end, the best thing about *I'm With The Band* is that I discovered the work of Cynthia Plastercaster from it. Not long after I finished the book, I learned that the Plastercaster collection was on display here in New York City at Thread Waxing Space. For those of you who don't know, Cynthia Plastercaster and her merry band of sculptresses would arouse rock stars and other media icons and then make plaster casts of their "rigs." Represented in the exhibit was Jimi Hendrix (frighteningly large), Jello Biafra (who knew?), Wayne Kramer (he has guts to let that one get out in public), Dan Kroha (from one of my favorite bands of all time, the Gories, and currently in the Demolition Dollrods), and many many others. Now that was a truly exciting demonstration of groupie power! I found my 15 minute stroll through the sea of plaster genitalia far more compelling than all 278 pages of *I'm With The Band*.

You're probably getting the impression that I didn't like this book. It's not that I didn't like *I'm With The Band*, it's just that I found it disappointing. Frankly, I'm starved for good groupie literature. I know I'm not gonna go out and fuck all those rock stars, but I certainly want to read about anyone else who will! So I implore you, if you're a star-fucker of any magnitude, to *please* share your stories with the rest of us, because we're dying to hear them.

Because *I'm With The Band* has been out of print for several years, you probably won't be able to find a copy at your local bookstore or at any of the online booksellers. A good used bookstore will probably have a copy. If not, you can find a copy at any one of the following places: on ebay.com, paperback copies go for somewhere between \$5 and \$10; on half.com, paperback copies go for somewhere between \$2.50 and \$10; on bookfinder.com, paperback copies go for somewhere between \$2.50 and \$15 and hardcover copies go for somewhere between \$12 and \$20. Shipping is usually extra.

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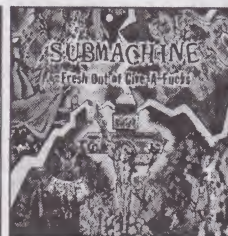
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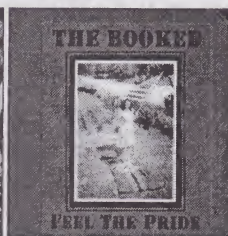
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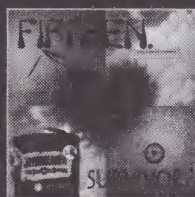
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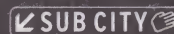
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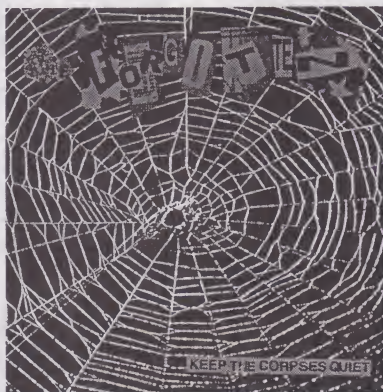


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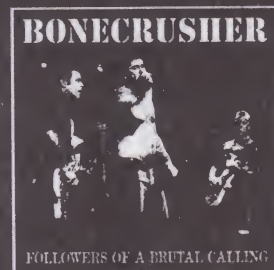
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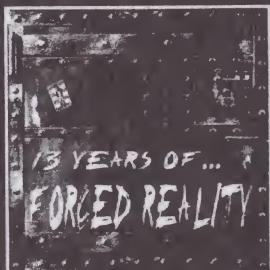
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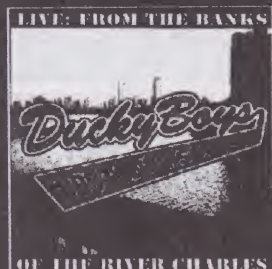
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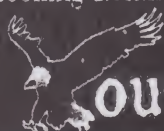


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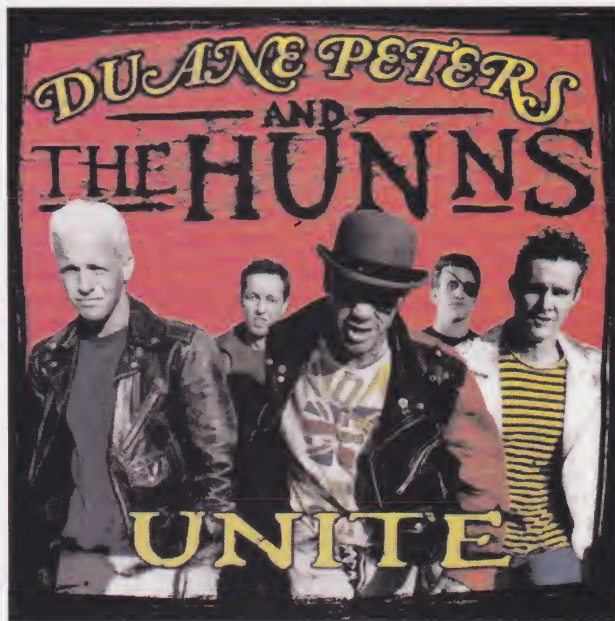
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